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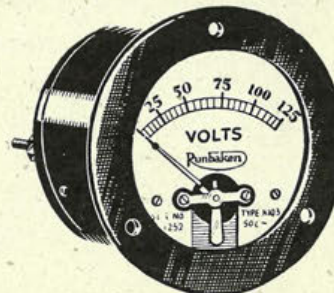
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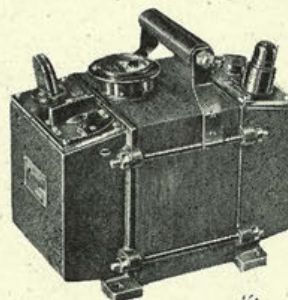
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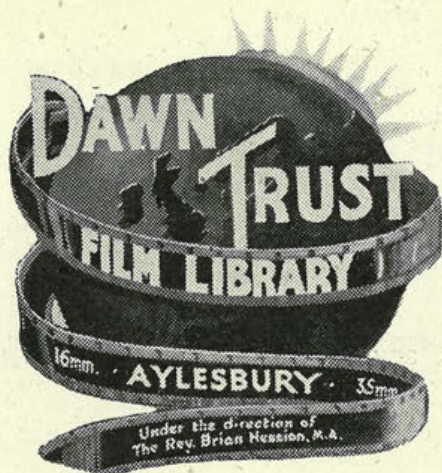
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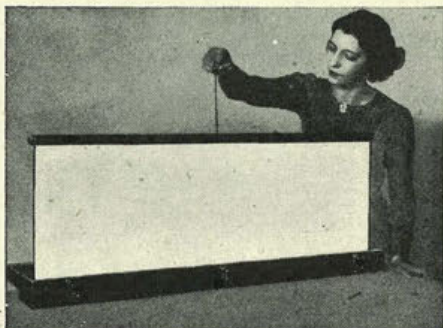
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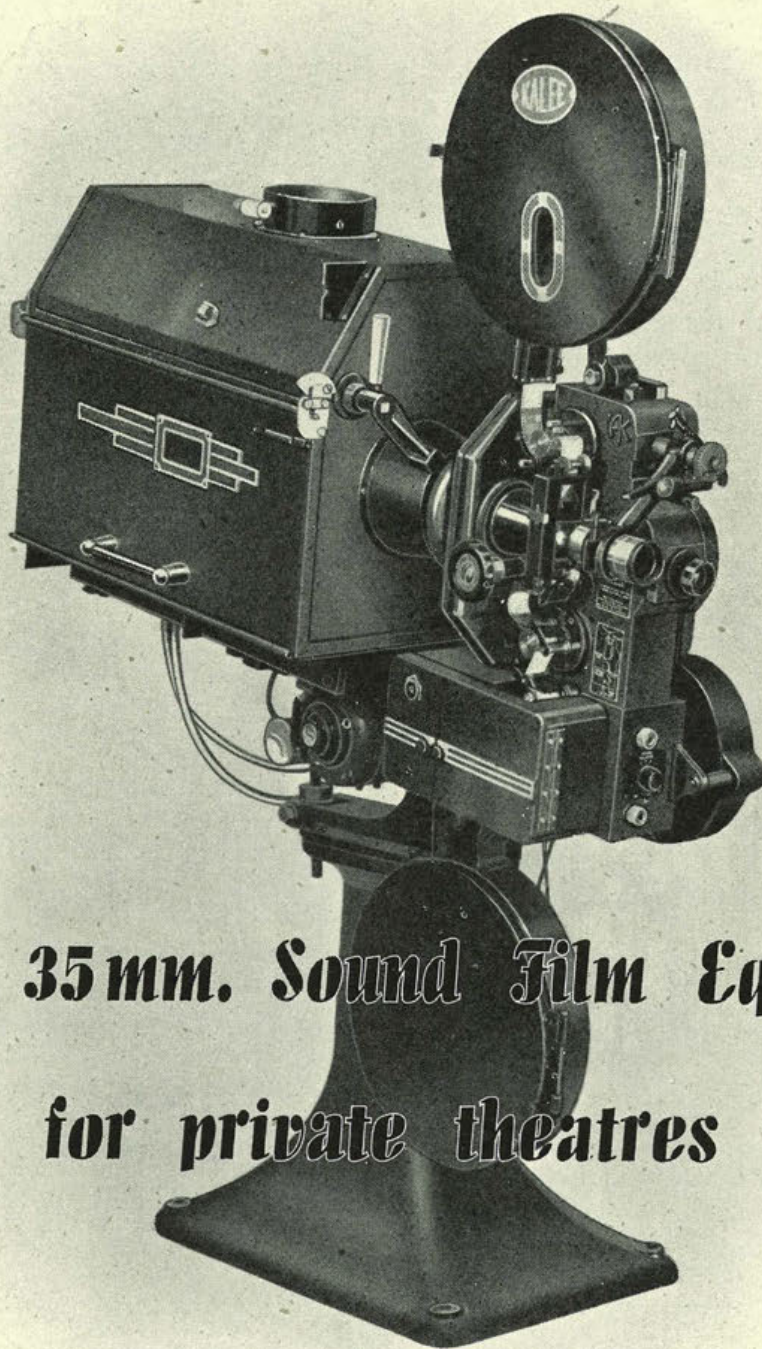
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TO READERS

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Les Visiteurs du Soir

THE FRENCH CINEMA DURING THE OCCUPATION

The first of two articles by HAZEL HACKETT. The second, to be published in the Summer SIGHT AND SOUND, will deal with the French cinema since the liberation. This article should be read in conjunction with the one that follows, in which ROGER MANVELL analyses in more detail the work of Marcel Carné

IN THE IMMEDIATE pre-war years, the French were making between 110 and 120 films a year. In the four years from 1940 to 1944 they made a total of 220, with only 29 in 1940, 78 in 1942, and as few as 20 in 1944. Through the courtesy of the Cinémathèque Française, I have been able to see about a dozen of the most important of these films and have found them so varied in character, quality and treatment, that it is impossible on this evidence to make a conclusive statement about the achievements and trends of the French cinema during the Occupation. French critics themselves have found it difficult to assess accurately the value of the work done in this period, particularly as they have had no outside standards of comparison, for it is only now that the major works of the British, American and Russian cinemas during the war are beginning to trickle into France.

An understanding of the conditions under which French films had to be made is a desirable if not an essential preliminary to seeing them. During the *drôle de guerre* almost nothing was achieved except Duvivier's *Untel Père et Fils* which only had its première in the autumn of 1945. In June, 1940, this lethargy became a paralysis which lasted until December, 1940, when the Vichy Government created the Comité d'Organisation de l'Industrie Cinématographique (known as COIC) to reconstruct the French cinema industry "on a rational and solid basis". Louis Emile Galey became head of the Direction Générale du Cinema and acted as liaison between COIC and the Government. The Committee's first work was, in the words of the official document, the "assainissement de la Profession Cinématographique", which in practice meant the elimination of the Jews who "polluted" it. The trade

unions of the different branches of the industry were suppressed and a professional identity card was introduced without which no one, from the humblest technician to the greatest star, was allowed to work. Before a film could be started, the script had to be approved by COIC and the finished work passed by the Vichy censor. Two further measures completed the control of the industry. The Germans invested capital in most of the French firms and Goebbels set up his own production company, the Continental. The double feature programme was suppressed, presumably because films were scarce owing to the cutting off of imported supplies, and the showing of a documentary and the one newsreel, *Deutsche Wochenschau*, was made compulsory.

DIRECTORS IN EXILE

These were the conditions in which the French cinema industry was expected to work. Its four greatest directors preferred to go into exile—Renoir, Clair and Duvivier to America and Feyder to Switzerland. Of those who stayed behind, there were some who simply wanted to continue to work because it meant their livelihood. But there were many who consciously felt it their duty to try to keep alive the traditions of an art that had been the foremost of its kind in Europe, and the machinery of an industry that, in 1939, had been the second greatest in France. Work in the studios began again early in 1941, and six months later ten films had been finished, of which four had been made by the Continental, a high proportion when it is remembered that France had then about forty-five production companies. The Continental offerings included Decoin's sentimental comedy, *Premier Rendez-vous*, with Danielle Darrieux and Louis Jourdan, and Christian-Jaque's *L'Assassinat du Père Noël*, an adaptation by Charles Spaak of a detective story by Pierre Véry.

The situation was a challenge to the ingenuity and inventiveness which had characterised the French cinema in the ten years before the war. Its greatest source of inspiration, everyday life and its human problems, was denied to it. Its only freedom was to ignore reality, a reality that was too painful and too close for artistic treatment and which in any case could never be handled so as to pass the German censor. French directors turned to historical literature, detective stories, fantasy and folklore for their raw material, and concentrated on the development of the aesthetic side, often at the expense of the human. In fact, a fair general criticism that has been levelled at the production of this period is that the décors are too perfect, the dialogues too witty or too literary, the lighting too subtle and the photography too artistic.

THE BEST UNDER VICHY

French critics have already drawn up several lists which claim to give the best films made during the Occupation. These are broadly in agreement and, after seeing most of the films, I find that my own list, which follows, does not greatly differ from theirs: *Nous les Gosses* (1941), Daquin's charming comedy which confirms the opinion that French directors are among the few who know how to handle children on the screen; *Le Mariage de Chiffon* (1942) and *Douce* (1943), Claude Autant-Lara's two delightful reconstructions of the 19th century with the irresistible Odette Joyeux; *Les Inconnus dans la Maison* (1942), Decoin's psychological study of adolescents based on a story by Georges Simenon, excellently done but not flattering to France in its picture of decadent youth and ignorant parents—made for the Continental; *La Nuit Fantastique* (1942), Marcel L'Herbier's surrealist comedy-nightmare; *Pontcarral* (1942), Delannoy's story of the Second Empire which shows a France that suffered reverses but lived to triumph and avenge itself, and his *L'Eternel Retour* (1943), a transposition of the Tristan and Isolde legend with script and dialogue by Cocteau; *Dernier Atout* (1942), Jacques Becker's satire on American gangsters, with Pierre Bost's dialogue; and *Goupi Mains-Rouges* (1943), from a peasant detective story of Pierre Véry; *Les Visiteurs du Soir* (1942), Carné and Prévert's Middle Ages folk story; *Les Anges du Péché* (1943), Robert Bresson's excellent study, with Giraudoux's dialogue, of life in a Dominican community; *Le Corbeau* (1943), Henri Clouzot's brilliant and horrible story of an anonymous letter-writer in a small French provincial town—made for the Continental; *Lumière d'Été* (1942), Gremillon's absorbing comedy with Prévert's dialogue, and his *Le Ciel est à Vous* (1944), with dialogue by Charles Spaak, the story of the ambitions and achievements in the field of aviation of an ordinary French man and woman, told with understanding and humour. The film exercised a great resistance influence because it illustrates how determination and hard work can attain the seemingly impossible. It is a reaffirmation of faith in human nature and is fit to take its place with the best of the pre-war French films.

A TONIC TO THE SICKENED

Of these productions, *L'Eternel Retour*, *Les Visiteurs du Soir* and *Le Corbeau* are the ones which have, as the French say, caused the most "bruit". *L'Eternel Retour* was hailed by some as the great "art-film" and by others as a piece of Wagnerian melodrama with something very near to German-inspired propaganda with its good and beautiful blonde Nordic characters and its mischievous

and despicable dark Latin ones. The production undeniably has style, but the shots by their too conscious artistry slow down the tempo, the emotion is blurred and the characters unreal. The atmosphere seemed to me quite un-French, although the film is the work of a French director and a French poet. Carné's *Visiteurs du Soir* came like a tonic to a France sickened by the third-rate Nazi productions with which the Germans flooded the country, and deprived not only of British and American films but of all French ones made before 1937, as well as those which Vichy considered "immoral". It is a fantasy of the Middle Ages, slow in movement, superbly photographed, but with too much cardboard about its settings and too much woodenness in its characters. For the French people, however, the important quality of the film was its "frenchness", and, in the idea of the devil and his creatures who were everywhere, setting each man against his fellow, they saw a reference to the occupying enemy, and, in the triumph of the young girl over evil through her purity and faith, an encouragement to moral resistance.

The most discussed film was undoubtedly *Le Corbeau*, which was made for the Continental by Henri Clouzot with a technical brilliance that places it among the best of the French productions of any time. Its unpleasant theme was ideal material for the anti-French propaganda which the film was undoubtedly intended to spread, for without exception its characters are liars, criminals or wastrels, each one of whom might well qualify to be the mischief-maker. It is a film which leaves you sick and disgusted with humanity, because it shows humanity decadent, worthless and thoroughly malicious. It is significant that the film was distributed in Germany under the title *Une Petite Ville Française* and that, although all the other Continental productions have now been passed for showing in France and abroad, this one has been banned. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that its sentiments are a crime not only against the French but against mankind, a fact which seems to have been recognised in the purge which took place after the liberation, as a result of which Clouzot has been forbidden to make any further films. Sacha Guitry is in the same position. He, so far as I can discover, made only two films during the Occupation, *Le Destin Fabuleux de Désirée Clary* and *Donne-moi tes Yeux*, with, as always, his own original scenario and himself as leading player. Both are reported to be poor. It seems to have been Guitry's personal behaviour rather than the contents of these films which discredited him and the feeling of most French people is still strongly against him in spite of published extracts from his journal entitled "Ma Défense", which have been appearing daily in *Paris-Matin*.

THE NEW MEN

During the Occupation three comparatively young directors have risen to the first rank. If we exclude the

established people who have been in exile, Marcel Carné, with his script writer, Jacques Prévert, now stand at the head of French film production. Their latest film, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, made before the Liberation, but not shown until early in 1945, is a chef d'œuvre of the French cinema and one that may well become a land-mark in the history of the film. Jacques Becker, who at one time was assistant to Jean Renoir, made his first film, *L'Or du Cristobal*, on the eve of the war. *Dernier Atout* appeared in 1942 and caused immediate interest by its wit, ingenuity and technical qualities. In 1943, Becker established himself with *Goupi Mains-Rouges* as one of the most important young directors. This drama of peasant life is deeply rooted in the earth, but its darkness is shot with flashes of humour and wit that are almost startling in their unexpectedness. The film succeeds brilliantly in relating its characters to their background and explaining them in terms of it, a method which Becker again tried to follow but with less success in *Falbalas* (1945), a love story set in a great "Maison de Couture". Perhaps the most original of the three is Robert Bresson who became known with *Les Anges du Péché* which attempts to show the conflict in a young girl between the spontaneous expression of her charitable instincts and the disciplined activity imposed on her by the rules of a Dominican community. Giraudoux's dialogue is excellent but it is Bresson's accurate observation and imaginative understanding of women's reactions which make the film memorable and moving. His second film, *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* (1945), with dialogue by Cocteau caused a great uproar because he dared to transpose to the present day a story of Diderot taken from "Jacques le Fataliste", and to present its stark melodrama and viciousness not only without the eighteenth century settings, which might have made it credible, but in a kind of anonymous vacuum divorced from any background of daily life. The film has been hailed as a daring experiment that failed, but as one critic said, the cinema has need of such failures. Bresson's approach to a theme is unusual and his development promises to be most interesting.

In these four years the French lived the life of prisoners, cut off from outside contacts, stimulus and criticism. The film-makers, along with the rest of the nation, were like men working in the dark with only their own inward light to guide them. With some of them, to use the Biblical paradox, that inward light was darkness. With others, it was the certain light of the French genius we have admired so much in the past, and it is this which has enabled the cinema during these years of isolation not only to survive but to develop and to achieve some enduring work.

Liberation came in August, 1944, and brought with it its own problems for the cinema industry as for the whole country. The way in which these are being tackled and the use being made of the new freedom will be discussed in a later article.

MARCEL CARNÉ

*A detailed analysis by ROGER MANVELL
of the latest work of one of the most brilliant
of French Film Directors*

PRIOR TO THE WAR Marcel Carné's films had already made their reputation in Britain. *Le Quai des Brumes* (1937) and *Hotel du Nord* (1938) had been shown in London and also provincially by the Film Societies. In 1939 *Le Jour se lève* was produced and when this was exhibited during the War in London, it was recognised as a masterpiece in the true tradition of the best French cinema, which combines rich human characterisation supported by unusually fine acting with the quality called realism. This realism implies faithfulness to the true situations and emotional reactions of human life together with the careful reconstruction of background and the atmosphere of locality.

During the Occupation Carné made two films, the titles of which have already become familiar in Britain though neither have yet been shown here. The first was *Les Visiteurs du Soir* (1942); the second, *Les Enfants du Paradis* (1944), was produced in two parts. These were played together for a long season in Paris recently at the Madeleine, the performance lasting nearly four hours. Both these films have been called masterpieces by responsible French critics. The British rights for *Les Enfants du Paradis* have been acquired by Sir Alexander Korda for twenty-five million francs, according to *L'Ecran Français*.

The distinguished French writer Jacques Prévert has worked with Carné on both these films; he also wrote the scripts for *Le Jour se lève* and *Le Quai des Brumes*. His writing gives the two later films an air of distinction which, though it sometimes slows the pace and gives a literary touch to the dialogue, adds to their evocative atmosphere. Both of these films seem extraordinarily nostalgic in their creation of different periods which are emotionally idealised and dressed in that beauty with which the poet invests the past.

Les Visiteurs du Soir recreates the scene of medieval legend. Two agents of the devil visit the earth as man and woman to confound the process of human love. They appear riding over the countryside to a castle where a betrothal feast is proceeding with the medieval pageantry



Les Visiteurs du Soir

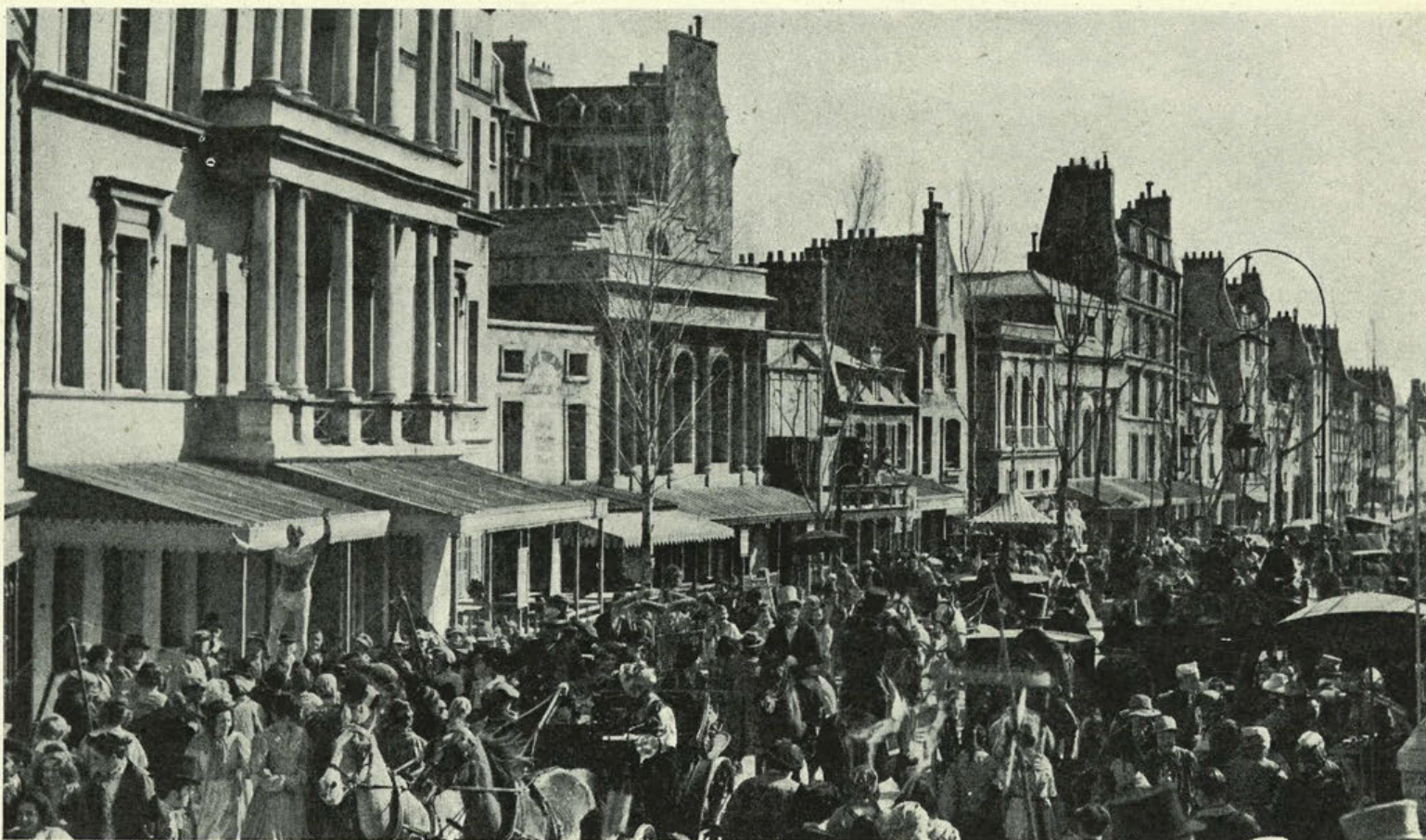
of fine costume and dishes served in procession to the long tables which flank the great hall. The man of evil and his sister appear as troubadours, the woman dressed as a man. They sing a languorous, sad love song after a hideous display of malformed dwarfs has revealed the romantic revolt of the sensitive bride against ugliness and the harsh masterfulness of the bridegroom. In the dance that follows the troubadour puts the dancers to sleep. They stand in a long line of still couples. The handsome minstrel then wakes the bride and hypnotises her into love. A long dress falls over the limbs of his sister and she leads away the bridegroom. The whole of this part of the story is treated with a languorous warmth and slowness of pace which emphasise the hypnosis of seduction. The dancers restored to life once more and the incident over, the devil himself arrives to make a greater mischief. He sets the older members of the newly united families in disorder; the bride's father is seduced by the woman of evil, who destroys for him the hallowed memory of his dead and beloved wife. Only one part of the evil pattern is broken; the troubadour himself is overcome with human love for the bride, and she for him. Whilst her father is obsessed with desire for the woman who preys upon him, the power of the devil is lost over

the true lovers whom he is forced to turn to stone under the trees beside the castle. Even so, the beat of their hearts remains eternally in his ears.

The legendary other-worldliness of this story demands a kindred technique. The immediacy, the sense of actuality created by Carné and Prévert in *Le Quai des Brumes*, and more especially in *Le Jour se lève*, is no longer appropriate. They are concerned here with atmosphere, to make this medieval palace a place haunted by the permeating deceits of evil. Jules Berry's Devil is a creature of vigour and loud laughter, a man who delights in the victims of his power. Jean Marais plays the troubadour with a slow earnestness; Arletty, beautiful, remote, endows her *femme fatale* with a supernatural air. The whole atmosphere is one of artificiality touched with horror as the ugly little dwarfs dance the accompaniment of evil during the night in the shadowed recesses of the castle's corridors. Their use is similar to that of the dwarf in *L'Eternel Retour*. While it is regrettable that the circumstances of the Occupation forced a director as important as Carné to leave the world of contemporary France in order to recreate an artificial world of the past with an artificial theme, there can be no doubt that the result is a film of considerable atmospheric power.*

*I would like to express my gratitude to the Cinémathèque Française who kindly arranged a viewing of this film for me in Paris.

Les Enfants du Paradis is a more ambitious and certainly a more important film. It is divided into two parts and plays little short of four hours. Again it turns to the past for freedom of expression, and again its theme is one of passion deriving from curiously evocative characters. The scene is theatrical life of about 1830 in the Paris boulevards: the theatre chiefly concerned is a rowdy, vivacious place where strong-blooded plays receive vigorous applause from the galleries. The actors live in a state of poverty little removed from vagabondage. But their profession makes them emotional and voluble, always in and out of love, man and woman exploiting each other's desire. In this world where everyone both on and off the stage lives more profusely and artificially than normal, Jean-Louis Barrault plays the part of a comic mime whose sympathies are more sensitive than those of his fellows, and whose heart is torn between conventional and romantic love. In the crowds of the boulevards, where with the white face of the clown he is helping to advertise the theatre, he is able to save Garance, played by Arletty, from arrest for robbery. He mimes, to the crowd's delight, what actually happened, and Garance is set free. She is a woman who is as much a victim of the men she attracts as they of the disturbance she causes. She falls in love with this wistful young man who is so effective on the stage but so repressed when he is away from it. The remainder of the long film results from



Les Enfants du Paradis

this episode, for no one who loves Garance is happy. Only Baptiste idealises her sufficiently to refuse the love she is prepared to give him in his garret. In the end he marries and she watches him, a famous mime, beneath her spangled veil from a theatre box.

The whole treatment of the film, with its strutting actor played by Pierre Brasseur, its many types among the theatrical people, its play on evil suggestion in the old pedlar who disturbs their emotions further, turns on overdrawn passionate characters and on scenes of great emotional tension. The miming scene before the crowd is beautifully contrived by Jean-Louis Barrault who, as an actor, is interested in the art of mime. Many scenes have great emotional qualities, the scene with the flower between Baptiste and the young actress who loves him, Barrault's white and mask-like make-up curiously blending with the flower itself, the scene where with sudden unexpected power he throws the jealous man about to attack him, the tender scene in Baptiste's garret when Garance opens her theatrical dress and reveals her naked body at the sight of which Baptiste tears himself away in terror that he will destroy and not fulfil love. "C'est terriblement simple, l'amour": but the film hardly shows this. When Garance finally decides to marry a rich count she does so with her heart elsewhere. The evil character of the jealous assassin, brilliantly played by Marcel Herrand, pursues her and finally murders her husband in a cunningly

handled sequence at a Bath. The count's death is symbolised only by a splash. Faced at last in his room by the two women, his wife and his mistress, Baptiste loses Garance again when she runs away while he tries vainly to catch her in the tightly crowded boulevard celebrating a carnival, and the harsh, broken voice of the pedlar seals his loss.

The title *Les Enfants du Paradis* is itself evocative. The shouting, pulsating enthusiasts of the gallery cheer on the actors: they understand only the easy emotion of the theatre; they do not realise the tragedy of the players' lives behind their public appearances. Often the scenes played on the stage, the mime of the rejected Pierrot outside the house so that he can only see the dancers through the window, or the scenes from *Othello*, themselves link up with the lives of the actors.

Les Enfants du Paradis is perhaps over-long, though I did not find it so. The dialogue has been criticised as mannered in the literary style of Prévert. But as in *Les Visiteurs du Soir*, the theme is artificial, an enlarging and over-stressing of life. For this, dialogue with wider powers of evocation than normal speech is required. This is precisely what Prévert has achieved. But it is to be hoped that both Carné and Prévert will return to a contemporary idiom once more. For it is in the contemporary idiom that French cinema has created its own form of poetry.

A HISTORY OF THE BRITISH CINEMA

The first authentic record is now being prepared

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE has recently set up a small Research Committee under the Chairmanship of the veteran British film producer, Mr. Cecil Hepworth, to initiate and guide research into the authentic history of the British cinema, both as an art and as an industry, covering exhibition as well as production. At present the Committee is working on the difficult early period, 1896-1903, and as a result of an appeal through the Press and also through many private channels in the Industry, a considerable body of material is being assembled, comprising such items as catalogues, contemporary publicity and press reviews, private notes, letters and memoirs, stills and photographs. In order to make public as soon as possible the results of the Committee's work so that it

will be available for the use of students of the cinema, it has been decided to publish an analysis of the material and facts obtained as a record history period by period, 1896-1903 (approximately) being the first. The personnel of this small working Committee is as follows: Mr. Cecil Hepworth (Chairman), Miss Rachel Low (Secretary), Mr. George Pearson, Mr. Ernest Lindgren, Dr. Roger Manvell, Mrs. Margaret Manvell. Dr. Manvell and Miss Low will be responsible for writing the text of the publications under the direction of the Committee, which will frequently invite people connected with the Industry during the period under review to join its meetings and add to the material being collected.

GOD AND FILM

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

A request by one of Britain's best known short film producers for the establishment of a Religious Film Centre. "It would be about the toughest work in filmdom, but there is probably no greater task upon which man could embark"

AS SO MANY PEOPLE to-day have such confused ideas on the meaning and place of religion, anybody wishing to write on the subject should first explain what he means by religion. He should also, I think, make perfectly sure that what he proposes to write is really worth writing, and will not be merely yet another contribution to the never-ending flow of religious books, pamphlets, tracts and texts which, though very sincere and comforting, leave us all exactly where we are at the moment, which is nowhere to be particularly proud of.

When one considers the ceaseless work of the Churches, of all denominations, in all countries, admirable in parochial matters, but completely ineffectual in world affairs, one realises that something is very wrong. And so unless a person has something to say that really will help the position, it would, I feel, be better if he wrote nothing. Perhaps religion needs a new name to enable it to reach those now ignoring it. I can't think of a name. Probably there isn't one, but somehow or other religion must not only regain the ground it has lost, but also embrace the ground it has never held.

AS ESSENTIAL AS BREATHING

Religion to me is a spiritual power which is, or should be, an integral part of *everyday* life. It is not a nebulous Something symbolised solely by Sundays, sermons and sentimentality. It is a vivid realisation, as distinct from a conventional belief, that God exists—and not only exists but matters. Religion, as I see it, is as essential as breathing, and you know what happens when you cease to breathe.

I do not hold the popular view that religion should have nothing whatever to do with politics, commerce, science, world affairs, dog racing, domesticity, and all the rest of it. I believe that it has everything to do with everything, and that anything which is not influenced by the spiritual factor is in need of a complete overhaul.

I believe, too, that religion, really understood and practised, would release a torrent of spiritual energy that would

make, say, destructive atomic energy appear so puny that the politicians and scientists who are all competing with each other for the honour of monopolising mammoth methods of destruction, would blush with shame at their powerlessness, and they would have to search the world in vain for men willing to drop their diabolical bombs on their fellow men. That will sound exaggerated only to those who have no knowledge of spiritual power.

Learned and good men have long realised the need for religion to employ modern media of expression to reawaken interest in spiritual matters—press, radio, stage, screen—but insofar as the screen is concerned, they have not been altogether successful for reasons well worth examining.

At this point I should mention that I am not approaching this subject from a national point of view. National or nationalised Christianity is meaningless to me. I am able to regard religion only as a universal power.

WHY?

Now all modern states have developed the education-training-informational kind of film to a remarkable degree. To-day, people are trained by the screen in a far more vivid way than was ever possible by the spoken word in the lecture room. They are trained in the arts of war (why 'arts'?), for science, medicine, agriculture, domestic science, engineering. There are films to cover all or nearly all our *material* primary requirements, and specialist Ministries are responsible for the respective outputs. There is a Ministry for everything except religion. Spiritual education is not catered for at all on the screen. Why?

Because religion is 'something apart'. It is unrelated in nearly every way to the governing of nations. It hovers hesitatingly in the background. The Church, representing God, quite definitely takes second place to governments. The comfortable answer is, of course, that God comes first. The truth is that governments do. Did the German millions follow their Churches or the Nazi government? Did the Churches follow Christ? And who are we to ask

the question? Any of us, anywhere? The peoples of the world have been and are being taught from childhood that the State is the god they must worship, and periodically sacrifice themselves for. That is one reason why, when governmental films are required to train people for the material life, they are made, but when religious films are required, they are not made. A second reason is that whilst Christianity continues to be divided up into various denominations working independently, there can be no far-reaching, properly planned films which shall make the teachings of Christ acceptable to all, and unless religion is acceptable to *all* people, it is without value. The third reason, interrelated to the second, is that there has not been, so far as I am aware, any realisation on the part of the few scattered groups who have been making what can best be described as Biblical films, of the fact that unless production is based on a firm policy, and the output is continuous—as regular as the release of a newsreel—the influence of religious films, or, preferably, films exerting a religious influence, will be negligible.

NO CORRESPONDING OUTPUT

Therefore, the position is that whilst there are countless films in all countries to train people in material requirements, sponsored by governments, and distributed by them, too, there is no corresponding output to provide spiritual education, and no governmental distribution machinery available, even if such films were made. I am not taking into account the equipping of Churches with projectors. *Outside* the Church is where religion is most urgently needed.

Whatever part of the world in which we were born, we are now treated as material beings, depersonalised, regimented, and officially regarded as having become fossilised into large lumps, each lump assuming the shape of its particular country on the map. It is claimed that each lump thinks, if it thinks at all, with One Mind. That is why we all talk, quite seriously, about “Russia” doing this; “Germany” thinking that; “Britain” wanting something else. It’s the lump speaking, or thinking, or being blown to bits, or planning to blow another lump to bits. Such arrant nonsense has spelt the doom of the Individual, and it is the Individual who should come first. Without him no nation could contain life. And it is to the Individual that films exerting spiritual power must be addressed, to unfossilise him; to give him back his sacred personality. Had all governments not encroached on holy ground and tried, extremely unsuccessfully, to do God’s work for Him, His representatives might have had a chance to make it clear

that in *every* Individual is a spark, and if all these sparks were ignited, not by governmental gunpowder, but by God, well, as I said just now, atomic plotters who can think of no other way to maintain what they call peace than by relying upon their respective destructive powers, would be sent scuttling away and told to devote themselves to tasks which would be for the betterment of their fellow men.

IMAGINE FOR A MOMENT

Imagine, for a moment, that several people, recognising the vital need for films containing spiritual truths, have asked me how to set about making them. The first visitor is a Protestant. The second is a Catholic. The third is a Free Churchman, and the fourth is a Quaker. They all want films which will show the way to universal brotherhood, superseding national animosity. Quite obviously, to satisfy them all, and the millions classified under their various denominations, together with the millions entirely unclassified, the films will need to present religious fundamentals common to all people, ignoring ecclesiastical differences. Next, we must give religion such a wide interpretation that the results will not be recognised as religion at all. We should plan to make a continuous series of films showing human life in all nations, and seek to distribute them in all other nations. How Individuals work, worship or don’t worship, live, play. How they bring up their children. Their art and their music. The kind and charitable acts they do as Individuals, as distinct from their mass behaviour under government commands. These films, intelligently shaped, would not only be preaching the Gospels, but would be making religion a reality, and showing that Christ’s teachings are as applicable to-day as when He made them. Such films would be the only ones in existence having as their aim the bringing of Peace through understanding and truth. But they must be continuous, and they must circulate throughout the world. No government would sponsor them, nor would U.N.O. undertake their production, for this assembly, wholly admirable within its material limits, must necessarily, in view of its political foundations, regard internationalism through national spectacles.

A GROUP WORKING APART

Only a group receiving its inspiration from God could undertake the work—a group established especially for the purpose and for no other. A group working apart from commercial studios (for one cannot be making a musical comedy one day and a religious film the next. Materially one can; spiritually, it is impossible). The group

would need to be staffed by those called to such work and not by people looking for a job. It would be about the toughest work in filmdom, but there is probably no greater task upon which man could embark. Out of this religious film centre should come films of the highest technical excellence, suitable for showing anywhere, theatrically and non-theatrically. To establish and maintain such an organisation for several years—time enough to have produced and distributed a regular output in various parts of the world—would cost far, far less than a quarter of a battleship, or a fraction of the cost of atomic bomb research, and if the combined Churches of Christianity cannot, between them, gather sufficient money for the purpose, it would be wiser to leave religious film production alone, for nothing increases present-day confusion more than the occasional

appearance of religious films suitable only for Churches, which present Biblical parables set in old Palestine, which, however well-intentioned, tend to remove religion from reality, and get nobody anywhere. It is too late in the day to be content with that kind of thing.

The only religious films which can help humanity now will be those which shatter the illusion that civilisation is composed of conflicting impersonal lumps—some of which are evil and labelled enemies; others friendly and labelled allies. The human race needs to be seen as it is, and not through mists of propaganda. And the Christian way of life can be practised only by peoples who have not been hoodwinked by governments, but who have realised that their neighbours are just like themselves.

Film is the medium to achieve that great purpose.

DIRECTORS MOVING UP

HAROLD LEONARD *writes from Los Angeles*

A GOOD MANY from Hollywood's last few classes of Best and Most Promising Young Directors were out of the running during the latest semester, having been away at war. They were making pictures there too, and the surprising thing was that, set to making documentary-type films after life-times devoted to "entertainment", they repeated their successes.¹ William Wyler made the superb *Memphis Belle*, John Ford *The Battle of Midway*,² and John Huston the early, epical *Report from the Aleutians* and the recent, human *San Pietro*. Frank Capra, assigned in the "Why We Fight" series a job of fact-conveying with less of the human centre than in these other films, developed a dynamic and explicit poster style for the projection of a story in which, however, the propaganda has already begun to show through the history. And Garson Kanin, with Carol Reed, in *The True Glory*, combined facts with people in one of the most intimate and moving films of the war.

Meanwhile several new directors, from stage and screen, plus one not new at all but newly important, have made pictures which, after a brief interval, still seem interesting enough to attract a glance in the direction of their makers.

Two, with but single films each, are from New York's former permanent-company theatre, the Group—Clifford Odets and Elia Kazan. Odets, of course, is the playwright, author of "Awake and Sing", "Golden Boy" (which played London in the fall of 1938, Odets and Kazan in attendance) and other plays, who after a scattering of screen-writing assignments was given the direction of *None But the Lonely Heart*, together with its screen adaptation. Kazan, brought from New York for the plum *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn* job, had done some acting in Hollywood but came this time on the wave of a Broadway directorial triumph which had had him directing "The Skin of Our Teeth", "One Touch of Venus", "Harriet" and "Jacobowsky and the Colonel"—four of the most important productions of two seasons of New York theatre—in succession. The mark of the Group was on them both. Group people in their approach to their work have been notably serious-minded; they have believed in study, in self-criticism; and they have been taught always to comprehend first the nature of the medium in which they were working. They have studied theatre from as many

¹ The one notable documentary director of before the war, Pare Lorentz, was engaged, ironically enough, not with documentary films but with photostat-like service films charting the topography of global air routes for the Air Transport Command.

² Also, it now comes out, the compilation of Nazi documentary and news-reel films, called *The Nazi Plan*, used as an exhibit in evidence at the war-criminal trials at Nuremberg.

points of view as possible—from the craft side, with the actors having additional interests in the fields of direction and writing, the writers in direction, and so on through the combinations; and everyone having opinions on content. And Group alumni in Hollywood have matched this theatrical Jack-of-all-tradesism with a similarly serious-minded engrossment in the whole medium and matter of the motion picture.

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

In Odets' case the preoccupation with the medium has been the rewarding side of his film work, to a degree that has perhaps accented shortcomings elsewhere. *None But the Lonely Heart* was better directed than it was written. In theme, mood, in the conception and delineation of the central character, the film was false, bathetic, inflated. Yet *None But the Lonely Heart* was an arresting film to watch and listen to, for the senses; it brought something new to the texture of motion pictures. The quality was unrelated to the circumstances of misty photography. Interesting and helpful but not crucial either was the fact of Hanns Eisler's authorship of the musical accompaniment—one of the few unimpeded chances given that marvellous film-music experimenter in a commercial score.

Most of the time manner made fascinating sense with matter, and what we had was that rare thing in the movies—a personal style of expression; a first or beginning style, no doubt—Odets would probably change it, develop it as he went along. But Odets' own.³

With Kazan's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, the new thing was less form than feeling. The script as structure was, to be sure, noteworthy; as an example of adaptation from a novel, it represented a job (by Frank Davis and the late Tess Slesinger) where the screen version, by removing from a meandering and formless narrative a single section and giving that section unity and shape and a certain fullness within itself, came out better than the original. Some of Kazan's scenes near the beginning of the picture had a slightly incongruous theatrical quality in the way they built toward curtain-like fadeouts. But the thing that *A Tree* had that made it remarkable was intensity, the intensity of feeling which the scenarists had given to the mother in the story, and which Kazan held to and made the centre of the film. Unremarkable thing? Scenarists had set out to

make a statement, of only a little more than average movie complexity, about how living in Brooklyn under certain conditions of poverty makes people, gentle at heart, turn grim and hard toward the very ones for whom they are making the effort. And the idea had come through to us with all the strength of a good literary original—without the watering down, the character tricks, the skeleton-bare, interminable stringing-out of the movie "version". A movie had said something forceful on its own.⁴

COMMERCIAL DIRECTORS

Among commercial directors (and I think it is fair to make the distinction) George Marshall and Edward Dmytryk have rounded important corners lately. Marshall, the older man, after three decades of making comedies and action pictures, has finally emerged to recognition as one of our leading directors of comedy. Not comedy of ideas, however pretentious or fuzzy as with Preston Sturges, the "art" comedy. But the showmanship, the Paramount, the Hollywood romantic comedy, which, with the Dorothy Lamours, Fred MacMurrays, *et al.* of recent years had become so syrupy, plotty and ungay. Marshall has not remodelled the form or made drastic changes. But he has lightened it, sped it up, taken stories that would have remained solemn bores with more literal-minded directors and made entertainment out of them, by having a little fun, going just a little wild, in the process. There is the best tradition in the world, of course, for such procedure. For Marshall comes to the Paramount comedy mills (for years Paramount's strongest department) with a background of work in the school of Sennett, Christie and Roach short-reelers, and then with that wonderful and too-much-forgotten group of fast motor-car comedies starring Wally Reid, Doug. Fairbanks, Johnny Hines and the rest, out of the twenties. Add a second strain from the experience of directing Westerns and serials (Marshall did three Ruth Roland serials and stretches of both Harry Carey and Tom Mix Westerns) and you get the combination of skills which created a new Marlene Dietrich for *Destry Rides Again* and with Betty Hutton as protagonist has practically got movie comedy back to being itself again. With a style that is extroverted, clean, limber, above all

³ Since *None But the Lonely Heart* Odets has written the screenplay for the first directorial effort in films of his friend and former Group Theatre associate, Harold Clurman—*Deadline at Dawn*. He also worked on the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's film in progress, *Notorious*.

⁴ Kazan has been back at play directing lately. His work has included, characteristically, a drama about a Southern Negro soldier's return home; the latest S. N. Behrman comedy, and just now, the new Maxwell Anderson play, "Truckline Cafe". He will soon be doing another Hollywood job, this time for M-G-M, directing *Sea of Grass*, described as "an epic of the struggle on the Western plains between cattlemen and small farmers".

natural, casual in its use of slapstick with the effect of making Sturges' slapstick seem almost studied, Marshall, you'll probably find, is the director-credit that will explain how many a film with all the external attributes of a stinker (*And the Angels Sing*, *Incendiary Blonde*, *Star-Spangled Rhythm*—but remember the prancing jeep scene?) kept you in your seat, interested to the end, almost, as it were, in spite of yourself.⁵

With *Murder, My Sweet*, Edward Dmytryk moved into the big time as a box-office director. *Murder* had been made from a Raymond Chandler novel, which was an awfully good beginning, so that when *Back to Bataan*, Dmytryk's next, failed so disastrously (it had been a headline-racing nightmare as a production), it was reassuring to find that with *Cornered*, another action "whodunit" like *Murder* which followed, Dmytryk was able to hit again the stride of *Murder*. Dmytryk is not old as a director, that is, he has been a director for just about five years, though to little more than business-office acclaim in his first terms with Paramount (who promoted him from editor), Columbia and Universal. He has done things in other modes besides the staccato murder-mystery—the sensation-mongering (but brisk, clean, also inexpensive) poster films, *Hitler's Children* and *Behind the Rising Sun*; the sentimental *Tender Comrade*—a sort of *Since You Went Away* with a sharper social consciousness but the same emotional glibness. But it is in *Murder, My Sweet* and *Cornered*—both films containing the "new" Dick Powell—that Dmytryk really shows what he can do. Probably the new Dick Powell is himself partly Dmytryk's creation: compare the Powell of René Clair's *It Happened Tomorrow* with Dmytryk's Powell, with its contribution from Cagney only more dapper (the carefully fingered hat, the French cuffs), its reminder of namesake William Powell but more dynamic (the nervously hovering wrists, the quick, hard walk). At any rate, Dmytryk has known how to point up, or "exploit", the Powell personality, the more easily, perhaps because its general "smartness"—in all the senses of that word—works in so nicely with the Dmytryk smartness. Dmytryk in his murder pictures has hit upon an effective film style. It is fast, it is trim (there are Dmytryk's years as a film editor to thank for the shaved scene lengths); but what makes it stand out above that of

his competitors is a certain surface treatment it has—a very clever realism. It is the very best kind of film realism: the kind that the gangster pictures developed, that made the gangster pictures real and that was itself made plausible by the actual, if sensational, connection between the material of the gangster film and everyday life. It is a decorative addition to the Dmytryk battery of effects. But with the detective-action-mystery story form, so isolated from anything approaching meaning or point, so nearly abstract in the real nature of its appeal, the realism ends up by being misleading, by being, with its heavy sort of seriousness, a little out of key.⁶

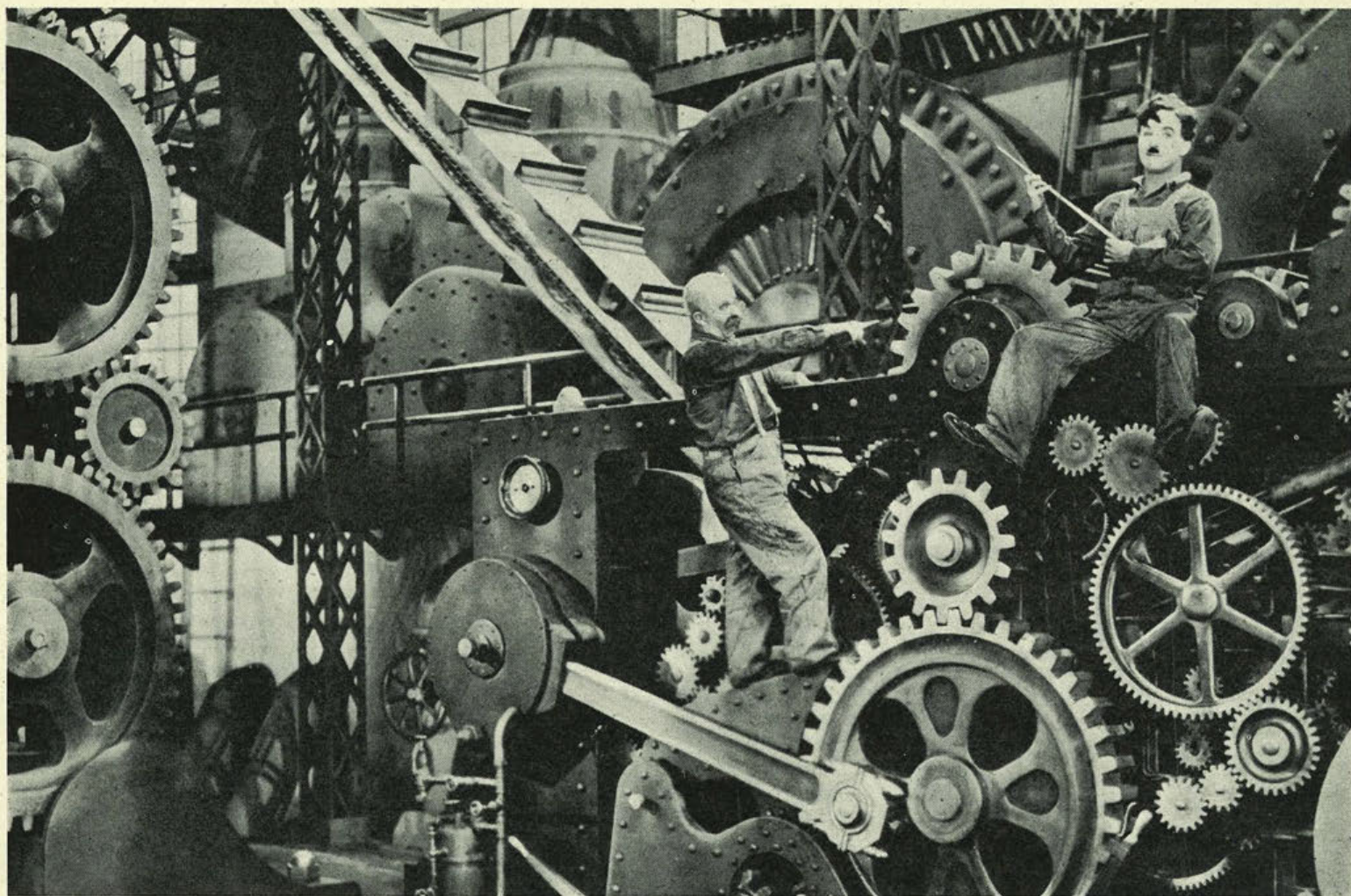
A NEW DIRECTOR

Vincente Minelli is the quite new director of *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Clock*, and the recent, less outstanding *Yolanda and the Thief*; and his work is perhaps the most developed as personal expression of the directors we have been discussing. He is almost too good to be true, on the one hand, at Metro, where individuality has never been much encouraged; and, again, with the always complicated problem of credit—is Minelli the real wonder man, or is it his producer (Arthur Freed, who discovered him and has supervised his three best pictures), his writers (Sally Benson, Irving Brecher, Fred Finkelhoffe on *St. Louis*; Paul Gallico, Robert Nathan, Joseph Schrank on *The Clock*, etc., etc.). What is clear is that Minelli is one of two constants on three different winning combinations, the records of all his collaborators being elsewhere spotty. And what is it that Minelli has that is unmistakably his, is consistently directorial?

There is a kind of magic to the effect Minelli gets again and again in *Meet Me In St. Louis*, as in the strange transition from straight narrative to the minor-key song, dreamy and only part realistic, of "The Boy Next Door". Again, the "Trolley Song" number in *St. Louis* is not revolutionary technically; but a kind of delirium is the effect on the spectator of a sum of excellences which include the genuine gaiety of its unhackneyed, non-backstage content, the good-as-"Oklahoma" costumes and the sets in the quietly humorous tradition of the same New York musical (and by some of the same hands), not to mention its rhythmic movement and cutting, reminiscent of the early Continental and Lubitsch musicals, e.g., *Drei von der Tankstelle*, *Monte Carlo*, etc.

⁵ A prolific director, Marshall in 1944 and 1945 turned out *Murder, He Says*, *Incendiary Blonde*, *Hold That Blonde* and *Blue Dahlia* (soon to be released). He has just finished *Monsieur Beaucaire*, a re-make of the Booth Tarkington novel, with Bob Hope. Already before the cameras is the promising *Perils of Pauline* (final title?)—a fictionization of the life of Pearl White, to star Betty Hutton.

⁶ Dmytryk is just finishing *'Till the End of Time*, a personal drama dealing with the rehabilitation of ex-Servicemen. Its producer is Dore Schary, who was similarly responsible for one of the first of such stories on the screen, *I'll Be Seeing You*.



Modern Times

National Film Library

CHARLIE THE KID

Some observations on a genius by PROF. S. M. EISENSTEIN. The first of three articles translated from the Russian by Herbert Marshall

"THE KID". The name of this most popular of Chaplin's films is fully worthy to stand side by side with his own name: It helps to reveal his character role just as the prefixes: "The Conquerer", "The Lion Heart", or the "Terrible" themselves determine the inner aspect of William who conquered the Islands of Great Britain, of the legendary courageous Richard of the Crusades or the wise Moscovite Tsar Ivan Vasilievitch the Fourth.

Not Direction. Not Method. Not Tricks. Not the Comic Technique. None of these things move me. I do not wish to delve into these things.

In thinking about Chaplin, one wants above all to delve into that strange structure of thought which sees Phenomena in such a strange fashion and replies to it with images of equal strangeness. And within that struggle—

to see that part which exists as a stage of perception of the outside world, before it becomes a conception of the world.

In short, we shall not concern ourselves with Chaplin's world outlook (Weltanschauung) but with his life-perception which gives birth to the inimitable and unrepeatable conceptions of the so-called Chaplin humour.

* * *

The fields of vision of a rabbit's eyes overlap behind the back of its head. He sees behind him. Condemned to run away, rather than to track down, he doesn't complain about that. But these fields of vision do not overlap each other in front. In front of a rabbit is a piece of space it does not see. And a rabbit running forward may bump into an opposing obstacle.

The rabbit sees the world in another fashion than we.
A different kind of vision produces accordingly a different kind of picture-image.

Not to speak of the higher transformation of *vision* into a *look* and then to a *point of view* that takes place the moment we rise from the rabbit to Man, with all his surrounding social factors. Till finally all this is synthesized into a world-outlook, a philosophy of life.

How the eyes are placed—in the given instance the eyes of thought.

How those eyes see.

Unusual eyes.

The eyes of Chaplin.

Eyes, able to see Dante's *Inferno* or Goya's *Capriccio* theme of "Modern Times" in the forms of careless merriment?

With what eyes does Charlie Chaplin look on life?

* * *

"The Secret of his Eyes" is undoubtedly revealed in *Modern Times*. As long as he was concerned with the pleiad of the most beautiful of his comedies, of the clash of good and evil, of big and little, his eyes as if accidentally and simultaneously lighting on the poor and the rich—laughed and cried in unison with his theme. But they apparently went contrary to their own theme when in the most modern times of American depression the good and evil "Uncles" turned out to be the real representatives of uncompromising social groups, at which the eyes of Chaplin first blinked, then narrowed, but continued obstinately to look at modern times and phenomena in the old way. This led to a break in the style of things. In thematic treatment—to the monstrous and distorted.

In the inner aspect of Chaplin himself—to a complete revelation of the secret of his eyes.

In the following deliberation I do not at all wish to say that Chaplin is indifferent to what is happening around him or that Chaplin does not understand it (even may be partly).

I am not interested in *what* he understands.

I am interested in how he perceives. How he looks and sees, when he is lost "in inspiration". When he comes across a series of images of phenomena, which he is laughing at, and when laughter at what he perceives is remoulded into the forms of comic situations and tricks: and with what eyes one must look at the world, in order to see it as Chaplin see it.

* * *

A group of delightful Chinese children are laughing.

One shot. Another. Close up. Mid shot. Again close up. What are they laughing at?

Apparently at a scene taking place in the depths of the room.

What is taking place there?

A man sinks back on a bed. He is apparently drunk.

And a tiny woman—a Chinese slaps him on the face furiously.

The children are overcome with uncontrollable laughter.

Although the man is their father. And the little Chinese woman their mother. And the big man is not drunk. And it is not for drunkenness the little wife is hitting him on the face.

The man is dead . . .

And she is slapping the deceased on the face precisely because he died and left to a hungry death, she and the two little children, who laugh so ringingly.

That of course, is not from one of Chaplin's films. These are passing strokes from that wonderful novel of Andre Malraux "The Condition of Human Existence".

In thinking of Chaplin, I always see him in the image of that merrily laughing little Chinese, seeing how comically the hand-slaps of the little woman make the head of the big man wobble from side to side. It is not important that the Chinese woman—is the mother. That the man—is the father. And it is not at all important that in general he is dead.

In that is the secret of Chaplin.

In that is the secret of his eyes.

In that is his inimitability.

In that is his greatness.

To see things most terrible, most pitiful, most tragic through the eyes of a laughing child.

To see the images of these things spontaneously and suddenly—outside their moral-ethical significance outside valuation and outside judgment and condemnation—to see them as a child sees them through a burst of laughter.

In that Chaplin is outstanding, inimitable and unique.

The sudden immediacy of his look gives birth to a comic perception. This perception becomes transformed into a conception. Conceptions are of three kinds:

A phenomenon genuinely inoffensive. And Chaplin's perception clothes it with his inimitable Chaplinesque buffoonery.

A phenomenon personally dramatic.—And Chaplin's perception gives birth to the humorous melodrama of the finest images of his individual style—the fusion of laughter with tears.

The blind girl will call forth a smile when, without noticing it, she throws water over Charlie.

The girl with her sight restored might appear melodramatic when in touching him with her hand she does not

fully realise, that before her is the one who loves her and gave her back her sight. And then within that very incident the melodrama may be comically stood on its head—the blind girl repeats the episodes with the “Bon-vivant”, saved by Charlie from suicide: in which the “Bon-vivant” only recognises his saviour and friend when he is “blind”-drunk.

Finally, *socially-tragic phenomena*—no longer a childish amusement, not a problem for a mind, not a child’s plaything—the comical—childish vision gives birth to a series of terrible shots in *Modern Times*.

The ability to *see as a child*—is inimitable, irrepeatable, inherent in Chaplin personally. Only Chaplin sees this way. What astounds is this very quality of Chaplin’s sight to see piercingly and immutably through all the workings of professional cunning.

Always and in everything: From the trifle *A Night at the Show* to the tragedy of contemporary society in *Modern Times*.

* * *

To see the world thus and have the courage to show it thus on the screen is the attribute of Genius alone.

Incidentally, he doesn’t even need courage.

For that is the way, and the only way, he sees.

We are grown-ups, and maybe have lost the ability to laugh at the comic without taking into consideration, its tragic significance and content.

We are grown-ups, who have lost the time of “lawless” childhood, when there were as yet no ethics, morals, higher critical values, etc., etc., etc.

* * *

Chaplin plays up to actuality itself.

It is the bloody idiocy of war in the film *Shoulder Arms*. The modern era of the most modern times in *Modern Times*. Chaplin’s partner—is by no means the big, terrible, powerful and ruthless fat man, who, when not filming, runs a restaurant in Hollywood.

Chaplin’s partner, throughout his repertoire—is another. Still bigger, still more terrible, powerful and ruthless. Chaplin and actuality itself, partners together, a pair in harness, play before us an endless string of circus acts. Actuality is like a serious “white” clown.

He seems clever and logical. Observant and foresighted. But it is he finally who remains the fool and is laughed at. His simple, childlike partner Charlie comes out on top. Laughing carelessly, without being aware that his laughter kills his partner.

Chaplin works “in a pair” with actuality. And that which a satirist is obliged to introduce into the given production by means of two shots, the comedian Chaplin

does in one shot. He laughs spontaneously. Satiric indirectness is created by a “mix” of the grimaces of Chaplin back on to the conditions which gave birth to them.

“You remember the scene in *The Kid* where I scatter food from a box to poor children as if they were chickens?”

This conversation takes place on board Chaplin’s yacht. We have been his guest for three days on the waters near Catarina Island, surrounded by sea-lions, flying fish and undersea gardens, which we look at through the glass bottoms of special little boats.

“You see I did that because I despise them. I don’t like children”.

The creator of *The Kid*, which five-sixths of the world cried over, because of the fate of an orphan child, does not like children. He is a “Beast”!

But who *normally* does not like children?

Only—children themselves.

* * *

Six months later, on the day I was leaving Mexico, Chaplin showed me the rough cutting copy, as yet without sound, of *City Lights*.

I sit on Chaplin’s own black oilcloth chair. Charlie himself is busy: At the piano, with his lips he fills in the missing sound editing of the picture. Charlie (in the film) saves the life of a drunken Bourgeoise who tries to drown himself. The saved only recognizes his saviour when he is drunk.

Funny?—tragic.

That is Saltykov-Schedrin.* That is Dostoyevsky.

The big one beats the little one. He is beaten up.

At first—man by man. Then more—man by society.

Once, long ago, there was a widely popular photograph either in the London “Sketch” or the “Graphic”.

“Stop for his Highness the Child!” Was the title under it.

The photograph depicted an impetuous flood of street traffic, in Bond Street, Strand or Piccadilly Circus, suddenly freezing at the wave of a “Bobby’s” hand.

Across the street goes a child, and the flood of traffic humbly waits, until his Highness the Baby crosses from pavement to pavement.

“Stop for His Highness the Child!” one wants to shout to oneself, when attempting to approach Chaplin from a social-ethical and moral position in the widest and deepest sense of these words.

“Stop”.

Let’s take His Highness as he is!

(To be continued)

*Michael Saltykov, who wrote under the name of Schedrin, a writer of genius, and one of the world’s greatest satirists. (See “Outline of Russian Literature” by Marice Baring.)

TRUTH AND BRITISH FILMS

"I suspect a tendency among our younger producers and directors, desperately trying to avoid the conventional, to make films more for their own pleasure than for the welfare of the box office", says A. JYMPSON HARMAN, famous film critic of the London "Evening News", in this provocative article

In one form or another, directly or indirectly, all films are propagandist, negative or positive, for their place of origin. Whether it is aware of the propaganda or not, the general public is influenced by every film it sees.—Paul Rotha ("The Film To-day").

THE BRITISH FILM seems to undergo a process of renaissance every time a decade of the century ends in a "5." It happened in 1915, 1925, 1935 and 1945. The discerning student of the film field, with all its ramifications, may well be justified in believing that the present re-birth is likely to be a more permanent affair than any of the others. Side by side with the world-wide, heavily financed efforts of Mr. J. Arthur Rank, there has recently appeared an association of "independent artists" under the banner of Sir Alexander Korda which seems likely to fill up any gaps in the new front left open by Mr. Rank.

What may we expect from these strong and healthy combinations? What should they attempt?

I make no apology for raising the questions in SIGHT AND SOUND. The Governors of the British Film Institute are, I am sure, well aware that, as Paul Rotha says, "under the thin veil of entertainment the hard fact is apparent that the film is the most influential medium yet discovered for persuading an audience to believe this or to do that". It is doubtful if the specialised educational or cultural film will ever overtake the tremendous influence of the "entertainment" film.

CANNOT AFFORD TO OVERLOOK

The film educationalist cannot afford to overlook the importance, for good or evil, of the average cinema programme. We are well aware of the sociological and commercial value that America attaches to the feature film.

Many of us are uncomfortably aware of the imposition on British character of foreign manners, talk and thought by films from overseas. Whatever may be the virtues of the American way of life, however vital for the safety of the world may be a good understanding between the English-speaking nations, a sharing of their civilisations, we in this country are entitled to maintain the age-old traditions of the British way of life. This cannot be done without a proportion of British films sufficient at least to balance the influence of the American kind.

At first sight, the efforts of Mr. Rank, his colleagues and his competitors, to sell expensive films in the United States, might seem to lead to a type of picture made specially to please the Americans. I do not believe that this is Mr. Rank's ultimate intention, though for a year or so it may be necessary to sugar the pill in that way. I do not believe that the best British technicians, Mr. Rank's or those of other producers, are temperamentally fitted to make "American" films. I do not even believe that it is necessary. The reception given in this country recently to true-blue British pictures by at least the better-class audiences suggests that the taste for this kind of thing can be made to spread throughout all the cinemas of the British Isles. I think that it is much more likely that American audiences will cultivate an extra taste for essentially British films than that an attempt to make "American" films will enable our producers to break through the natural opposition of Hollywood's vested interests.

FAIRY TALE ATMOSPHERE

When I said that British film makers are not likely to be happy making the American kind of film, I was thinking of a quality in recent British films which can be most

succinctly expressed as Truth. Alternatively, it can be called Logic, or Sincerity, qualities which the routine American film leaves wide open for exploitation by our own producers. I find it hard to believe that American audiences as a whole prefer the fairy-tale atmosphere of the treatment of the average Hollywood picture, though it is well known that Hollywood insures its enormous expenditure by aiming at the lowest common denominator and that the mental age of Americans is lower than that of our own people.

British films are already aiming at a higher rate of intelligence. For anyone responsible for feeding large circuits of cinemas, this is a courageous policy. It may well be that Mr. Rank will have to adapt his circuit construction sooner or later to avoid losses in cinemas where, for the time being, the more intelligent class of picture is not welcome. In fact, I hold now as I have done for 25 years of writing about films, that the classified cinema is the only salvation of the good film. Fine pictures such as *Henry V* and *Brief Encounter* have had unfortunate experiences in some of the circuit cinemas. They were not the sort of thing the audiences were used to or demanded by their present standard of appreciation. They should have been discreetly shown only in districts where suitable audiences exist.

But it is to be hoped that such disappointments will not cause British producers to neglect the intelligent or what I prefer to call, the truthful nature of the new British film.

THE DOCUMENTARY

It is interesting to reflect that our films at their best were born in this mould of integrity. I refer to the documentary, a method of film treatment in which Britain has for long led the world, and may claim to have influenced modern Hollywood production. This we owe largely to Grierson. The pioneer work of Flaherty may correctly be claimed as British, and in the hurly-burly of war the fact seems to be overlooked that *The Lion Has Wings*, though hastily produced for a particular purpose and only partly successful, did blaze a trail for the type of factual-fictional type of screen drama which reached its finest moment in *The Way Ahead*. Michael Powell's *Edge of the World* was but an early dramatisation of the documentary style, and the influence is still seen in his latest, *I Know Where I'm Going*.

The Way to the Stars had all the austere qualities of the documentary and here there may be a warning for our

sincere young producers. Realism, logic, truth must all be bent to the traditional requirements of drama and comedy, though they must never be renounced entirely. If we are interested in the use of the entertainment film as a means of cultural and educational enlightenment, we must not deprive it of its power to "take us out of ourselves". Therein lies the subtle influence of the film, good and bad in its effect.

OVERLOOK THE IMPORTANCE

I suspect a tendency among our younger producers and directors, desperately trying to avoid the conventional, to make films more for their own pleasure than for the welfare of the box office. I repeat that success at the box office is the surest means of insuring success in propaganda.

This tendency, while neglecting if not ignoring popular demands, also results in pictures which overlook the present importance of projecting the British way of life in the best possible manner. The contention that *The 49th Parallel* was as much pro-Nazi as pro-British is well known and, to my mind, deserves some support. There have been other war-time films which showed the Nazi as a pretty smart fellow, misguided though he may have been.

The Demi-Paradise was hardly a complimentary picture of certain aspects of British social and industrial life, and the gentle satire of *The Tawny Pipit* was likely to go over the heads of many British cinemagoers, to say nothing of those overseas. The glue-throwing Justice of the Peace in *A Canterbury Tale* and the decadent hero of *The Rake's Progress*; the defaulting soldier of *Waterloo Road* and the stupid old campaigner of *Colonel Blimp* were poor examples of the British character to put before the world.

These objections may appear to be mere pinpricks; but my experience as a writer for a popular newspaper leads me to believe that a very large proportion of the public accepts the facts presented by the films in a very undiscerning fashion.

If this is true of our own people, what of the millions in the Dominions, in the United States and on the Continent? And of the untold masses in jungle villages, Tibetan fastnesses and coral islands, who are soon to be assailed by Hollywood's world-wide dissemination of the American way of life by means of sub-standard films?

BACKS NOT EASY RIS

The stage attacks the cinema, but the latter does not retaliate. Here is a light-hearted article by J. C. TREWIN, well-known dramatic critic and literary editor of "The Observer", praising the magnanimity of the Film Industry. "Its barons, so it would seem, rarely say: 'Our backs is easy ris. We must be cracked-up, or they rises, and we snarls'"

ONE OF THESE MONTHS a dramatist, British or American, may write a play with a film director as hero, a noble and unaffected film actress as heroine, and a perfectly plain and sensible scene in a film studio as the gentle heart of the piece. Equally, of course, Groucho Marx may appear as Hamlet, and Charles Laughton may return to the London stage. I bracket the three events because each seems as possible as the next. Certainly, if the first ever happens I shall rush with the tidings to the office of SIGHT AND SOUND, crying as Celia does in *As You Like It* (a film that once starred Miss Bergner as Rosalind): "O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful, and yet again wonderful, and after that out of all hooping".

MALICE IN WONDERLAND

The plain truth is that, when a dramatist considers the screen, he settles down to an evening of Malice in Wonderland. No question of being willing to wound but half afraid to strike. He is perfectly ready to do either. He uses the flat of his sword and he uses the point. It is all cut-and-thrust and snicker-snack. And, heavens, how he enjoys it. To be alone with a quire of paper, a freely-running fountain-pen, and the Hollywood Joke: what more can man desire?

The film industry, in return, seems to be surprisingly mild. It sentimentalises about the theatre. It recreates past glories. It sheds tears over vanished musical comedies, and the grand old-timer making his last appearance, and departed variety stars singing the Dear Old Songs. On reflection, this may be a subtle way of pointing out that the theatre is dying or dead, and that all one can do about it is to be vaguely melancholy and autumnal and strew rosemary over the coffin. It's an idea; but I prefer to think that the cinema is magnanimously turning the other cheek and letting the dramatists rail. (What say they? Let them say.)

FRIENDLY GESTURES

Sitting contemplatively the other evening, I tried to remember some of the theatre's friendly gestures to Hollywood, its amiable attempts to present an abstract and brief chronicle of that great world elsewhere. There was, for example, *Hollywood Holiday* by the British dramatists Benn W. Levy (who is now a Socialist Member of Parliament) and John van Druten who now, probably, knows more of the fabled city than he did in 1931. A Miss Pinnett of Bayswater, who was once, we gather, governess to Hedda Maelstrom, film star (full marks for christening), is brought to Hollywood on Hedda's recommendation, as the last word upon the behaviour of the British nobility. In order to pin down this invaluable Pinnett, Phenomenal Pictures, Inc., buy her film scenario, for undoubtedly she has written one. The rest is Hollywood. That is to say, Miss Pinnett becomes engulfed in the golden whirlpool, wins renown as "Battling Pinnett" (because she manages to slap Hedda's face), and wearily watches her scenario shaped into a prison drama, a piece of Polar exploration, a romance of Ruritania, and, in the end, an epic of the Foreign Legion. (I sigh contentedly here, recalling how, in the long ago, Rider Haggard's "Ayesha" was taken for no particular reason to reign among the Polar bears.) So it all goes on. Levy and van Druten might have called their farce *Haywire Holiday*. They described it as an extravagant comedy; even so, one or two of the critics of 1931 complained that it was not extravagant enough. You can never satisfy some people.

Once in a Lifetime, by Moss Hart and George Kaufman, which Hollywood had the sense of humour to film, was just as moonstruck. You have to imagine in this what occurs when three second-rate vaudeville artists in the *Singing Fool* era (or the time of the Flood, as Hollywood dates it), set up a voice-production unit in the Herman Glogauer studios. Glogauer once rejected the Vitaphone,

and he is not going to be caught again: he accepts everything. Presently the dimmest of the trio is ordered to direct a film, and finds that every error is regarded as a thrust of ingenuity and genius. Once this obviously normal and everyday situation is established, the authors have a deal of simple fun. There is a nice touch at the end when, having bought two thousand aeroplanes by mistake, the deplorable George realises that everyone is calling for Epics of the Air, and that Glogauer's have cornered Hollywood's supply of aircraft.

PLANET FROM BIRTH

Then we had a British comedy, *Britannia of Billingsgate*. Here Sewell Stokes and Christine Jope-Slade turned to transfix Elstree and Denham. Their weapon was a new charwoman star, ex-studio cleaner and fish-porter's wife, in agreeable contrast to the tempestuous extravagance of her colleagues. Hollywood caught it again in *Boy Meets Girl*, by Bella and Samuel Spewack, with its baby star who was doomed to become a planet from birth. At his nativity the front of heaven was full of fiery shapes and burning cressets (in Technicolor), and the herds, as someone says elsewhere, were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields. At any rate, almost as soon as he was born, he was acclaimed as Crown Prince of Tragedy and Emperor of Emotion.

Without question, there have been other drives at Hollywood—many of them. To-day I can only remember Bruce Winston gently cartooning a film director, a luscious Hungarian rhapsody, in *Three Waltzes*; a general blur, over twenty years, of large men in larger horn-rims re-writing *Antony and Cleopatra* in Lower Californian; orchidaceous vamps throwing temperaments in a variety of expensive sets; and all sanity and simplicity buried, so to speak, under a star-y-pointing pyramid. An accurate picture of the industry? That, I hasten to hedge, must depend upon the taste and fancy of the reader.

Two other plays come to mind, one from England, *The Shadow Man*, during which someone in a film studio attempts to murder the hero of "The Piccadilly Gunman", then in production. To stop a film with that title almost any crime might have been pardonable. Suspicion rested upon the sound engineer; but at this distance I have no idea who was responsible. Much clearer are the memories of a scowling German producer, and of a continuity girl who had modelled herself on Zasu Pitts and spent the evening wringing her hands and murmuring in monotone.

SIGHT & SOUND

All copies of SIGHT AND SOUND that we are allowed to print under the present paper restrictions have been sold to regular subscribers. We ask your forbearance, therefore, for not being able to accept new subscriptions until the situation eases

FLAMING HUNGARY

The second play was *Storm Song* by that original ironist, Denis Johnston, who has now come back to command television at Alexandra Palace. He took us to an island off the Galway coast where a film unit under a flaming Hungarian director (what is there about Hungary?) had spent the summer on a documentary film instead of the synthetic Irish comedy, all saccharine-and-shamrock, that had been ordered. The play ended in tragedy, the director's death during the storm for which he had been waiting; but his company had a notable film even if it was the wrong one.

On the whole the theatre has done gallantly. (It does but jest, poison in jest.) I cannot help thinking it a pity that none of our major dramatists has inspected Hollywood. Bernard Shaw has not issued a pronouncement. Sir James Barrie did not glance roguishly around the studio door. Galsworthy neither found a pressing problem nor tackled emotionally an extra's fight for life. Maugham has not twirled his rapier. And, so far as I am aware, though it is hard to keep up with him, none of Mr. Bridie's plays during the last few weeks has had any relation to Hollywood. Usually America has preferred to do the work itself—Broadway versus Hollywood—though recently exchanges have been fewer. There is, of course, always a chance that the plays will be bought for film production and that the screen will sizzle with Technicolor coals of fire. That is the best of Hollywood. Its barons, so it would seem, rarely say: "Our backs is easy ris. We must be cracked-up, or they rises, and we snarls". No doubt, Denham and Elstree are fully as magnanimous. After all, it's only the dear old theatre. Even if "superfluous lags the veteran on the stage", he is entitled to the satisfaction of a dying speech and to one last desperate kick.

THE FIRST FEATURE IN AFRIKAANS

The first South African feature film in Afrikaans has just been made by the producers of "Heritage." Here CAPT. COLEY, the producer, describes future plans

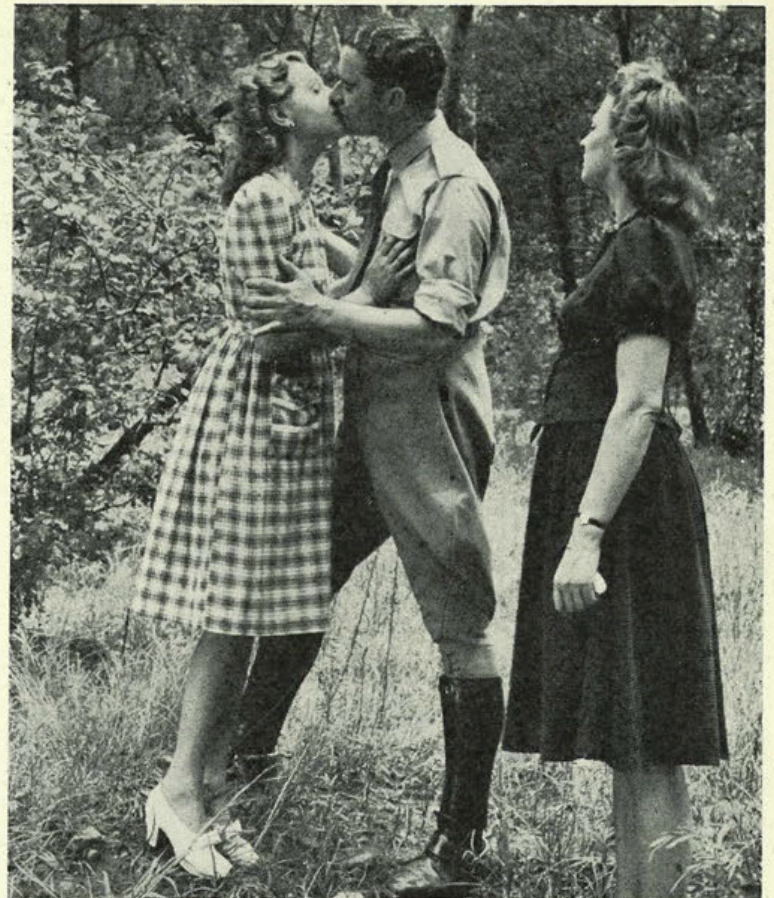
EXTRACT FROM the last published Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa, published by the Government in 1939:

"For the first time particulars are available of the language spoken in the homes of the people. In the urban areas 53 per cent. of the European population spoke English in their homes against 41 per cent. speaking Afrikaans. On the other hand, in the rural areas 84 per cent. speak Afrikaans and only 14 per cent. English".

Generally speaking, this huge percentage of the population, speaking Afrikaans in their homes, had never been catered for from a film point of view, until, in 1939, the first company formed for such a purpose came into operation. This company, Union Film Productions Ltd. (Unifilms), was not able to operate immediately for the benefit of the Afrikaner, owing to the outbreak of the war. The company was fortunate in being equipped with the newest and most up-to-date production and laboratory equipment, so that its output was tied to the South African war effort.

It is interesting to note that owing to our peculiar position (geographically, etc.) it is necessary for a production concern in South Africa to make its film productions entirely from the raw film to the finished product. This necessitates being equipped for all laboratory work as well as production work. Yet the resulting films must take their place on the public screen alongside those of Hollywood and England. The public naturally expect the same standard of quality.

During the war period the Company worked to full capacity, seven days a week with shifts totalling 16 hours a day. The work entailed included millions of feet of 16 mm. sound prints made for the Union Defence Force from negatives supplied to this Government by the British War Office, the printing and processing of many Ministry of



Die Wildsboudjie

Unifilm

Information films which were circulated in South Africa for propaganda purposes, and the production of our own war propaganda productions. Amongst the latter was the film, in Afrikaans and in English, *Heritage*, which was the most important film made in South Africa during the war, probably the most important film that has ever been made in this country. This film, with other productions, was circulated in the Allied countries as well as in the Union.

With the end of hostilities, the Company was able to set about its true objective, that of making quality full-length feature 35 mm. films for consumption by this huge Afrikaans-speaking population.

The first full-length 35 mm. fiction feature to be completed is made on a famous Afrikaans play, "Die Wildsboudjie". Because of the nature of the story, it makes an admirable film, the play having hitherto been restricted to the limits of small theatre stages.

As the story deals with farming life the expansions possible on the "films" are obvious.

The film is eight thousand feet (35 mm.) in length and is a comedy concerning the shooting of a buck by one farmer on the farm of another (without the latter's knowledge) to supply the visiting parson with a Sunday dinner. The play is rich in comedy and brings out much that is dear to

the heart of the Afrikaner—all of whom are born “boers” (Afrikaans for farmer).

It is unnecessary to make more than passing comment on the technical and other qualities of the film. South African short productions in English have, for some years, had to take their place on the public screen in programmes from Hollywood and England and the public here is probably one of the most critical in the world.

Undoubtedly, the advent of the film marks the beginning of a new era as regards films in South Africa.

This Company will be moving within a year into its new studios and laboratories in Stellenbosch, in the Cape Province, where over 100 acres have been purchased within the municipality of Stellenbosch, the cultural centre of South Africa, situated within a few miles of Cape-town. It is expected that the new buildings will be completed by then and they will constitute the finest and largest studios by far in the Southern Hemisphere.

The location of these new studios could not be surpassed anywhere. Although inside a municipality, they are situated

within the most beautiful mountain scenery of South Africa. Within 50 miles there are annual snows, where a winter club indulges in winter sports every winter. The studios will be within a very few hours by first class tarmac roads to the city and port of Capetown, and in another direction fifty miles away there are waste deserts and sandy deserts. Within 20 miles is the sea coast with sand dunes, and within 25 miles rocky coasts and great ocean rollers. By daily aeroplane service, within a few hours, there are the facilities of the famous Game Reserves of the Kruger Park and the greater game country of Bechuanaland. Needless to say, all the wonderful colour of South African native life is on the doorstep, so to speak. In short, there is every possible kind of location within the easiest possible reach of the new studios, and the land itself on which the studios are being built is a setting of which film producers dream. In conclusion, it should be mentioned that this company is an entirely private concern with no influence, financial or otherwise, from outside the Union of South Africa.

THE VOICE OF SCOTLAND

A small country but a proud one—and justifiably so in view of its past and present achievements. “All in all” says NORMAN WILSON in this article, “the picture of film production in Scotland begins to look exciting”

ABOUT THE END of 1944 I amused myself with cataloguing the documentary films which have been made in and about Scotland, and discovered that they numbered just under a hundred. Paul Rotha, I remember, declared with emphasis that this was a very good proportion of the total output of British documentary. Maybe—but we are not satisfied. You see, we are a little nation and we lack the cumulative propaganda power of press, radio and governmental “information” which the large countries—including England—have at their command. Some way or other we have got to make our voice heard and an increasing number of Scots feel that an intelligent use of the Cinema is one of the most effective means of saying our piece.

But films cost a lot of money and, apart from what we can squeeze out of the Treasury and the British Council, we have got to find it ourselves, from unofficial—and, if necessary, unorthodox—sources. When the Empire Ex-

hibition was held in Glasgow in 1938 it was found that Scotland had little or nothing in the way of films apart from *North Sea* and a number of G.P.O. productions, to show in the fine cinema that had been built as a national shop window. To make good this deplorable lack, a Films of Scotland Committee was hurriedly formed and started canvassing for funds. A Glasgow business man provided a basic £5,000 and then contributions were cajoled out of various funds and trusts. As a result some half dozen films were produced—and a very creditable survey of Scottish scene they provided.

These films—*The Face of Scotland*, *Wealth of a Nation*, *The Children’s Story*, *Sea Food*, *They Made the Land*, *Scotland For Fitness*—did not attempt to present Scotland as a Fitzpatrick paradise. John Grierson had wisely been called in to supervise production, and the pictures were firmly based on reality. Scotland’s problems, stemming

mainly from the jungle world of nineteenth century industrialism, were fairly stolid and the way they were being tackled made as exciting as the scenic background which a policy of expression might easily have exploited.

THE WAR

With the outbreak of war the Films of Scotland Committee ceased to function and for some time it seemed as though Scotland had lost its so recently found screen voice. But not, it might be added, its will to use cinema in the national interest. When thousands of schoolchildren were evacuated from Glasgow at the threat of bombing, the Scottish Educational Film Association, in conjunction with the Scottish Office in Edinburgh, hurriedly organised a system of mobile film units which toured the countryside in an attempt to make good the loss of the exiled youngsters' regular visits to "the pictures", which they missed so badly. Drawn from the Scottish Central Film Library of educational subjects, with the addition of some entertainment reels from the commercial libraries, the programmes were often makeshift and inadequate; but they were appreciated by the children—and for different reasons by their harassed foster parents. This experiment was the beginning of the Ministry of Information's network of mobile cinema circuits which has since grown to such vast dimensions.

In the early days of the war all film production, only rightly, was concentrated on the national effort and there were no films on Scottish subjects until in 1942 *Squadron 992* was made by Henry Watt. Dealing with the Firth of Forth Balloon Barrage and directed by a Scotsman, it had a genuine national flavour. This film was followed at rare intervals by comparatively few other Scottish productions. There were Jack Elliott's *Scotland Speaks*, produced by Strand; Stanley Russell's *Fighting Fields*, jointly produced by Scottish Film Productions and G.B. Instructional; Paul Rotha's *Land Girl*; and another Stanley Russell production, *Cally House*, dealing with a boarding school for evacuated Glasgow children.

FORESIGHT

Around the same period a number of British Council films dealt with Scottish themes—*Border Weave*, *Western Isles*, *Land of Invention*, *Song of the Clyde*—but it was not until the end of 1943 that a really serious effort was made to prepare a carefully planned programme of production which would present a comprehensive survey of the Scottish scene. Under the auspices of the Scottish Office such a plan was worked out in co-operation with the Ministry

of Information, and when its first fruits began to appear it was reassuring to find that they were not mere records of departmental achievement. Obviously policy had been planned on forward-looking lines and some of the films, such as *Children of the City*, delved well beneath the surface of social problems. Produced by Paul Rotha and directed by Budge Cooper, this study of juvenile delinquency well merited the distinction of being one of the best documentary films of 1944.

Power for the Highlands and *Highland Doctor* (also Paul Rotha productions), *Transatlantic Airport* (Crown), *Housing in Scotland* (Strand), *A Farm is Reclaimed* and *Seed of Prosperity* (Campbell Harper), *Birth Day* (Rotha) and *Clean Milk* (Realist) are now being followed up by other films on local government, regional planning, land reclamation, fisheries and other matters of importance in the building of a new and better Scotland. The comprehensiveness of this film survey may be gauged by the fact that *Scotland's Record*, an omnibus volume giving a many-sided picture of the Scotland that has grown out of the war, has been illustrated entirely from Scottish Office films.

OFFICIALDOM DANGEROUS

But grateful as we are for the enterprising and stimulating film policy of the Scottish government departments, many Scots feel that it is a dangerous thing to depend entirely on such official sponsorship, and several moves are being made to encourage other agencies of production. A new organisation called Scottish National Films has recently been formed and Joseph Macleod has left the B.B.C. to undertake the direction of this new venture, which aims at building complete studios for the production of films for commercial distribution. In Edinburgh, Campbell Harper Productions are now installed in a remarkably well equipped sound studio, and a new company has recently been formed to make educational films. In Glasgow there is the studio of Scottish Film Productions and the unit of Stanley Russell.

Various other developments have been rumoured and there should now be no lack of native film-makers to create for Scotland a place on the screens of the world. Among the new sponsors to whom these producers look for a steady flow of work are reviving industrial organisations, the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, the recently constituted Scottish Tourist Board, the Scottish Development Committee and similar public bodies. All in all, the picture of film production in Scotland begins to look exciting.

NEWS FROM GERMANY

What they are doing in the various occupied zones, by H. H. WOLLENBERG.

GERMAN FILMS, both silent and talking, such as *Madchen in Uniform*, *The Blue Angel*, the great mountaineering pictures connected with the names of Arnold Fanck, Luis Trenker, Leni Riefenstahl, and others are still frequently shown in this country at private shows, special screenings and, above all, by film societies. They give ample evidence of the most considerable contribution made by pre-Hitler Germany towards the evolution of the Film as a novel form of Art.

Of course, German film activities—distorted to an instrument of Nazi propaganda—completely broke down together with the Hitler regime. But what has been happening since?

What, for instance, has happened to those once world-famous artists who did not, like many of their colleagues, emigrate and devote their talent to the productions of Hollywood, Britain and other countries?

Leni Riefenstahl, for instance, found herself in the French zone of occupation after the German collapse. It will be remembered that, during the first years of the Hitler dictatorship, she had been featured as the Fuhrer's favourite, was entrusted with producing special films of the Berlin Olympic Games 1936 and of various Nazi party rallies on a lavish scale until, quite abruptly, she disappeared in complete oblivion some time before the War. After emphasising to French press reporters that she has always been an artiste, nothing but just an artiste, she is now reported to have gained permission for carrying out her plan of a screen adaptation of the opera "Tiefland" by D'Albert.

Even more surprising reading is a report in a Swiss journal about a conversation with Luis Trenker in the South Tyrol. He goes as far as to claim that he had never even been a German, and is trying to pose as a Nazi victim who had to leave the country and to continue work in Italy where he made two films in Rome; it is obviously absurd that a man persecuted by the Nazi Gestapo should have been able to produce pictures in Fascist Italy.

Among the more prominent of those German artists under arrest for reasons of special Nazi party affiliations are Werner Krauss, Heinrich George, Gustav Gruendgens

and the director Karl Ritter. Emil Jannings has also been barred from practising his profession.

On the other hand, that great actor Paul Wegener, who in the early stage played so prominent a part in promoting films as an art, has received a well-deserved honorary doctor's degree from Rostock University in recognition of his exemplary anti-Nazi attitude.

* * *

Are there, amidst dislocation and destruction, and in spite of the division into four zones of occupation, any indications discernible of a revival of German film activities?

Discarding mere rumours, reliable news in this, as in so many other respects, is scarce. In the British zone, it has been reported that in Hamburg, second biggest city of Germany and rallying point of a good many artists from Berlin and other places, a film producing unit has been formed by several well-known film actors and actresses including Willy Fritsch (once UFA star No. 1), Matthias Wiemann, Herman Speelmans, Irene von Meyendorff, Kristina Soederbaum and Karl Martell.

From Berlin it is reported that a production of sixteen feature films has been scheduled for 1946 by the film section of the new Chamber of Artists (successor of Goebbels' Reichsfilmkammer) under its head Dr. Wolf von Gordon. The programme includes two completed films: a screen version of the "Fledermaus" operetta by Joh. Strauss and *Veterinary Surgeon Dr. Vlimmen*. Features in preparation are: *Love Couple* 1945, with the days following the German collapse as background; *Victory of Truth*, *The Man Who Got Off His Uniform*, *Under Spain's Starlit Skies* and *The Man I Shall Kill*; all of them intended to enlighten the German public about the true causes of its fate. The same re-educational purpose will be served by a new screen adaptation of *Hauptman von Koepenick* (The Captain of Koepenick), a telling satire on Prussian militarism in the Kaiser's day by that brilliant progressive stage and screen writer (banned by the Nazis) Carl Zuckmeyer. Werner Hochbaum, too, one of pre-Nazi Germany's most gifted directors, is preparing a film titled *The Way in the Dark*. It is hoped that, in spite of the damage caused

to Berlin studios and equipment, it will be possible to materialise this interesting and apparently valuable programme.

* * *

Scarce as information is about production, it is no less scanty and incomplete as regards distribution and exhibition. Again the main handicap of a reliable survey, apart from general dislocation, is the regional division into four administrative zones of occupation. Such details as have become known are as follows:—

In the *French* zone, 373 film theatres have been reopened so far, according to a French source; 320 in Germany proper, 53 in French-occupied Austria. By the same source, a further number of 18 cinemas is given as operating in Berlin and 38 in Vienna.

In the *American* zone, the figure of film theatres in Bavaria is given at 97, including 15 halls in the Bavarian capital Munich. (The pre-war figure of cinemas in Bavaria was 500 approx. with 80 of them at Munich).

American pictures have been shown at an increasing rate. A kind of a selective censorship is being exercised by the Motion Picture Export Association of America, a subsidiary of the Motion Picture Association of America (so-called "Hays Organization"). Its vice-president, Mr. Maurice Goodman, has been at Munich to supervise the distribution of the first batch of 48 films. The subjects selected for that purpose are interesting, considering the special circumstances; here, therefore, is a characteristic choice of titles as lately shown in the American zone:—*Going My Way*; *No Time For Love*; *Magic in Music*; *Our Town*; *I Married a Witch*; *It Happened To-Morrow*; *Gold Rush* (the old Chaplin film); *Flesh and Fantasy*; *Hundred Men and a Girl*; *It Started with Eve*; *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo*; *Seven Sweethearts*; *Young Tom Edison*; *Madame Curie*; *Human Comedy*.

This list clearly indicates the mixture of "escapist" entertainment with more informative or enlightening subjects which is being applied to the German mind. Evidently typical (European) war, underground, spy and Gestapo stories—anything that may hint at "propaganda"—has carefully been avoided.

* * *

The total of film theatres in operation in the *British* zone has not been published yet. The number of halls, however, open to civilians at *Hamburg*, the greatest city under British occupation, is given as 20 (pre-war figure: roughly 75 - 80). Cinemas open to civilians are, incidentally, banned to troops.

British films for exhibition to German (and Austrian) audiences have so far been supplied by the Film Section

of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office. They have been distributed by a special Film Section of the Control Commissions for Germany and Austria respectively.

Feature films, sub-titled in German, as prepared by the P.I.D. include:—

Rembrandt; *The Lamp Still Burns*; *San Demetrio*, London; *Quiet Wedding*; *Fanny by Gaslight*; *The Foreman Went to France*; *Man in Gray*; *Blithe Spirit*; *I'll Be Your Sweetheart*; *Love Story*; *Halfway House*; *A Place of One's Own*; *On the Night of the Fire*; *On Approval*; *Dead of Night*.

Special screenings for selected audiences have been arranged both in Germany and Austria, of the film *Henry V.*, which were a great success. On the whole, the programmes have a mixed reception, according to "News Review", although there is a distinct hunger for entertainment.

At the same time, selected German produced films have been shown after they had been carefully "vetted" by the British Information Control Unit. In addition, there has been an exchange of film material between various Allied zones.

Apart from British feature films, a number of Documentaries for German audiences have been supplied; they were prepared by the M.O.I. and the British Council with German commentaries recorded in this country.

A special newsreel is produced in Germany by an Anglo-American unit with headquarters in Munich; apart from generally available newsreel material, additional material is supplied by special camera teams operating in Germany.

It has been reported from Hamburg that one newsreel showing the Nazi criminals at Nuremberg being charged with murder included some shots of the havoc wrought at Hiroshima by the atom bomb. This soon had the audience whistling ironically.

* * *

As to the future, certain changes have taken place since the beginning of April. The functions of the P.I.D. in Bush House have been transferred to the London Control Office of the Control Commission in Norfolk House; at the same time, many of the activities so far carried out in London will be continued in Germany. British films, instead of being sub-titled, will be synchronised with German dialogue by three German firms in Hamburg licensed for that purpose. In Berlin the British controlled "Mars" laboratories and studios at Spandau have been overhauled and re-equipped to synchronise, sub-title and print British feature films.



Men of Two Worlds

Two Cities

FILMS OF THE QUARTER

By ROGER MANVELL

I. BRITISH FEATURES AND DOCUMENTARIES

THERE WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY DEARTH of new British feature films during the first three months of 1946. Several important films such as *Brief Encounter*, *The Rake's Progress* and *I Know Where I'm Going*, as well as the long-heralded *Caesar and Cleopatra*, appeared during December. Several important films will be released during the second quarter, such as *The Captive Heart*, *A Matter of Life and Death*, *The Overlanders* and *Men of Two Worlds*. Only two very ordinary films represent Britain this quarter, *Night Boat to Dublin*, which at the most was no more than a competent thriller, and *The Lisbon Story*, which should never have been made into a film at all since nothing can conquer its essential staginess and its ludicrous and at times dangerous international ignorance.

Meanwhile *Brief Encounter*, *The Rake's Progress* and *I Know Where I'm Going* have established themselves as interesting and significant films. They represent, above all, the great quality of contemporary British cinema, its

independence and variety of style. This is due to the number of small units (Cineguild, Individual Pictures, Archers Productions, Sydney Box Productions, etc., and the units which make up Two Cities and Ealing Studios), all of which have developed an individuality of style contrasting strongly with the rubber-stamp of Hollywood entertainment. About a third of our total feature-product can be relied upon now to show the results of the growing talent of the dozen or more directors who are the imaginative strength of our cinema's renaissance. With comparative freedom to make the films which capture their creative interest, they are continuing the tradition of good British cinema which was originally implemented mainly by the war film. *Caesar and Cleopatra* showed none of these qualities. It turned a charming but thin play by Bernard Shaw into a Cecil B. deMille spectacle so that the out-moded modesty of the piece was travestied by its lavish mounting.

Documentary has continued its post-war output during the quarter. Propaganda shines in *It Might Be You!* (Crown; director, Michael Gordon). This effective film, made to engender care in all road users, works up a story very skilfully in which everyone, pedestrians, cyclist and car-driver, takes those small risks which escape notice for thirty years until one day you become one of the daily twenty in the nation's road toll of death. By virtue of the cinema's power to link action to action we know that these several people will end up in one collective accident; the whole structure of the film points to it, so that, from a propagandist angle, we are out of our seats imploring them to take care before the story is half done. This goes to show how an honest propaganda film should be made.

The monthly *Britain Can Make It* series is now to replace the *Worker and Warfront* series. Produced by Paul Rotha, the old series was of especial use, not merely to introduce the factory programme and get the canteen quiet for the two-reeler "feature" film, but also to put across a variety of short items of interest about what people were doing in the War. These could vary from a disquisition by Low on cartoons to a children's clothing exchange idea, or some interesting tid-bit from the production front (making camouflage nets, for instance). *Britain Can Make It*—I carries on the policy under the same producer. The most interesting tid-bit here is Sir Stafford Cripps introducing the subject of motion-study, for it is evident after a moment that this is precisely the sort of thing the film can demonstrate so much better than the lecture or the text-book. Motion-study is the science of economic hand-movements in such jobs as packing or assembly. Rhythm and order are the essentials, and the film demonstrates the psychological as well as the output factor in favour of more motion-study in industry.

A film of considerable interest is Geoffrey Bell's Shell Unit production for M.O.I., *Personnel Selection in the British Army, 1944—Officers*. This film is intended for the specialised audience only and plays about an hour and a half. A considerable deal of its playing time is devoted to unrehearsed action and unscripted interviews and discussion. This is a hazardous proceeding, but when men and women are reasonably sure of what they are doing, both the radio and the film have proved that they forget to be camera-conscious or microphone-shy. Geoffrey Bell has analysed his difficult subject, the psychological and military testing of candidates for O.C.T.U., and with the aid of Rodker's animated diagrams, makes the process

clear while devoting the bulk of his screen-time to the results of three weeks' shooting at an actual War Office Selection Board. Only a psychologist can deal adequately with the methods described and illustrated in the film, but as a demonstration of the expanding usefulness of the cinema, this picture is an admirable and absorbing contribution.

The Last Shot (directed by John Ferno and Jim Mellor) and *A Defeated People* (Crown; directed by Humphrey Jennings) are films photographed in Europe for general information in this country. *The Last Shot* is a salutary lesson to a Britain which has known neither occupation nor starvation as to what these constitute in human terms. *A Defeated People* is a simple record of the price certain urban areas of Germany have had to pay for initiating a war. The first incites not pity but admiration and sympathy. It was made in Holland since the Liberation; many of its pictures show conditions immediately after the Germans left. The commentary by Arthur Calder-Marshall is grim and effective: "Under famine everyone grows very old very young", for instance.

Greenpark Productions have made *We of West Riding* (director, Ken Annakin) for the British Council and *Cyprus Is An Island* (director, Ralph Keene) for M.O.I. The first is a human study of an urban family of mill-workers whose life is described both in the mill and at leisure. The photography is effective and the grimy, sloping streets achieve a grey beauty through Peter Hennessy's camera. *Cyprus Is An Island* is possibly the best documentary of the quarter. Its commentary by the poet Laurie Lee avoids the pitfalls of spoken poetry such as emasculated *Our Country*. The words are direct and simple, yet they shine with a certain grace when the camera lifts and swings over the beautiful coasts of Cyprus and the ancient relics of the past glories which have ruined her. The film combines what is rarely combined in documentary, the poetic, impressionistic style with genuine information about the island and its economic problems. The problems of Cyprus are world problems in miniature, the planning necessary to increase agriculture and repair through the application of scientific methods the devastation of past exploitation of the island's resources. Cyprus offers considerable footage of perfect scenic photography; but in the slight narrative worked into the theme of the film the people themselves are given a full chance to show those human qualities which it is the ultimate task of documentary to demonstrate to the world.



India Strikes

(British Official Photo. Crown Copyright Reserved)

Butchers

II. CONTINENTAL FILMS OF THE QUARTER.

THE OLD YEAR closed with the present French Minister of Information's film *L'Espoir* (*Days of Hope*). André Malraux was deeply involved during those days of our general inanition, in the hope and the bitterness of the Spanish war, and, like Hemingway, was not content only to write about it. Ivens and Hemingway filmed it in *Spanish Earth*. Malraux made *L'Espoir* and subsequently wrote the novel of the same title which was published in France and translated into English, both in 1938. The book was possibly a more important work than the film, which was never allowed exhibition by the French censorship until after the Occupation of France was over. The print lay concealed throughout these years. *L'Espoir* is the most important new French film to be shown in London since the War. It has the hard poetry of realism, the poetry of men who believe in the importance of their individual actions as they run down the slope of a street in overalls and plimsols with death in one or other window above them, as the harsh sunlight reflects on them off a white Spanish wall while they decide on an improvised plan to get their little contribution of guns and explosives out to their comrades. The immediacy of this French-Spanish film covers its defects of roughness because, as Hemingway said in his film, men cannot act before the camera in the face of death. Malraux's camera searches the heart of Spain

most closely in the opening sequences of the Basque peasant group staring down on the dead Italian pilot who had come from his own Fascist country to serve them. Each mutters a tribute: each stares the common thought. The great moment of the film, devised and conducted like a symphony and yet acted with the simple natural quality of face which comes from genuine experience of a like sorrow, is the gathering of hundreds of peasants to do honour to the dead and wounded airmen (democratic German among them) whose old bomber could not cross back over the mountains after a successful raid on a secret Fascist airfield. Inevitably to Darius Milhaud's music of triumphant lamentation the crowds build up over the countryside like the harbour-mourning sequence in *Potemkin*; roads are filled, sloping-paths zig-zag with the black figures, walls are lined with faces that weep and men who clench their fists. It is a *tour de force* of cinema which succeeds.

No other new French film has comparable importance to *L'Espoir*. *Metropolitain* was a slight but pleasingly-made melodrama-comedy of a husband who works on dayshift and has adventures in the evening while his wife works on nightshift. Albert Prejean succeeds as a pale copy of Gabin, and Ginette Leclerc is a type to make the censor dream of crime committed with a sharp blue pencil. The

background of Paris, the Metro, the tenements, the docks, had an authenticity which lent quality to a thin story. This same Parisian background and the excellent direction of the children are the virtues of Louis Daquin's *Nous les Gosses* (Us Kids), made during the Occupation. It is a French *Emil and the Detectives*, spoilt somewhat by too many adults behaving like children. *La Symphonie Fantastique* (directed by Christian-Jaque) showed France regrettably copying the Hollywood from which she was cut off at the time the film was produced. Berlioz (played in a theatrical and not in a cinematic style by the fine actor Jean-Louis Barrault) passes from woman to woman, and seems on one occasion to get his music blown into him through an open window. All the hocus-pocus of garrets, inspiring, difficult or faithful women, and music flashing ready-made as a gift from the clouds, ruins a film which could have been France's tribute to Berlioz.

TWO FROM SWITZERLAND

Switzerland is rightly determined we should see her in a role of a peace-loving receiver of refugees. *Marie Louise* and *The Last Chance* are both made by an Austrian refugee director, Leopold Lindtberg. Jacques Feyder and his wife, Françoise Rosay, made *Une Femme Disparaît* there during the War. *The Last Chance* (starless as the refugee group it records) is the most important of these films. M.G.M., in their admirable plan to give non-American films a chance on the non-specialised market, have rather tumbled over themselves to sell this film as a masterpiece. It is a moving, sincere, admirably made record of how one American and two British servicemen shepherd a pathetic, well-characterised little band of refugees over the Italian-Swiss border. The film has its own beauty of the loyalty of people sharing risks and distress. *Une Femme Disparaît* is a composite-story film showing Mme. Rosay in a superbly-sustained performance as four women, a crazy school teacher reminiscent of her study in *Un Carnet de Bal*, a famous and mannered actress who commits suicide because she is not received by her daughter's mother-in-law, and the two real delights of the film—a stubborn Swiss peasant woman and the delightful cunningly-vivacious and florid wife of a voluble Italian boatman. The value of the film lies entirely in the virtue of these brilliant characterisations, together with the authenticity of the mountain-farm background to the longest episode.

Among Russian films a revival like *Peter the Great* or *Lenin* in 1918 is worth more to the cinema than many of the newer pictures. The best of these was *Children of the Soviet Arctic*, a documentary-feature of the bringing of education to the people of the Soviet North. The children are admirably handled by Mark Donskoi who has become one of the best directors working in Russia. *Ural Front* is the dry informative result of divorcing realism from poetry. The removal of factories wholesale from the West to the Urals could surely have been made more heroic and exciting than this film, which concentrates on board meetings in the factory office and billeting problems in the Ural town. The best of this film is the authenticity of the Ural home of Tamara Makarova and her mother. Tamara Makarova is a beautiful actress and knows how to express her emotions by a prolonged smile and a face expressive without words, which is the essence of screen acting. *Marriage* (Chehov), *Christmas Slippers* (Tchaikovsky) and *Without Dowry*

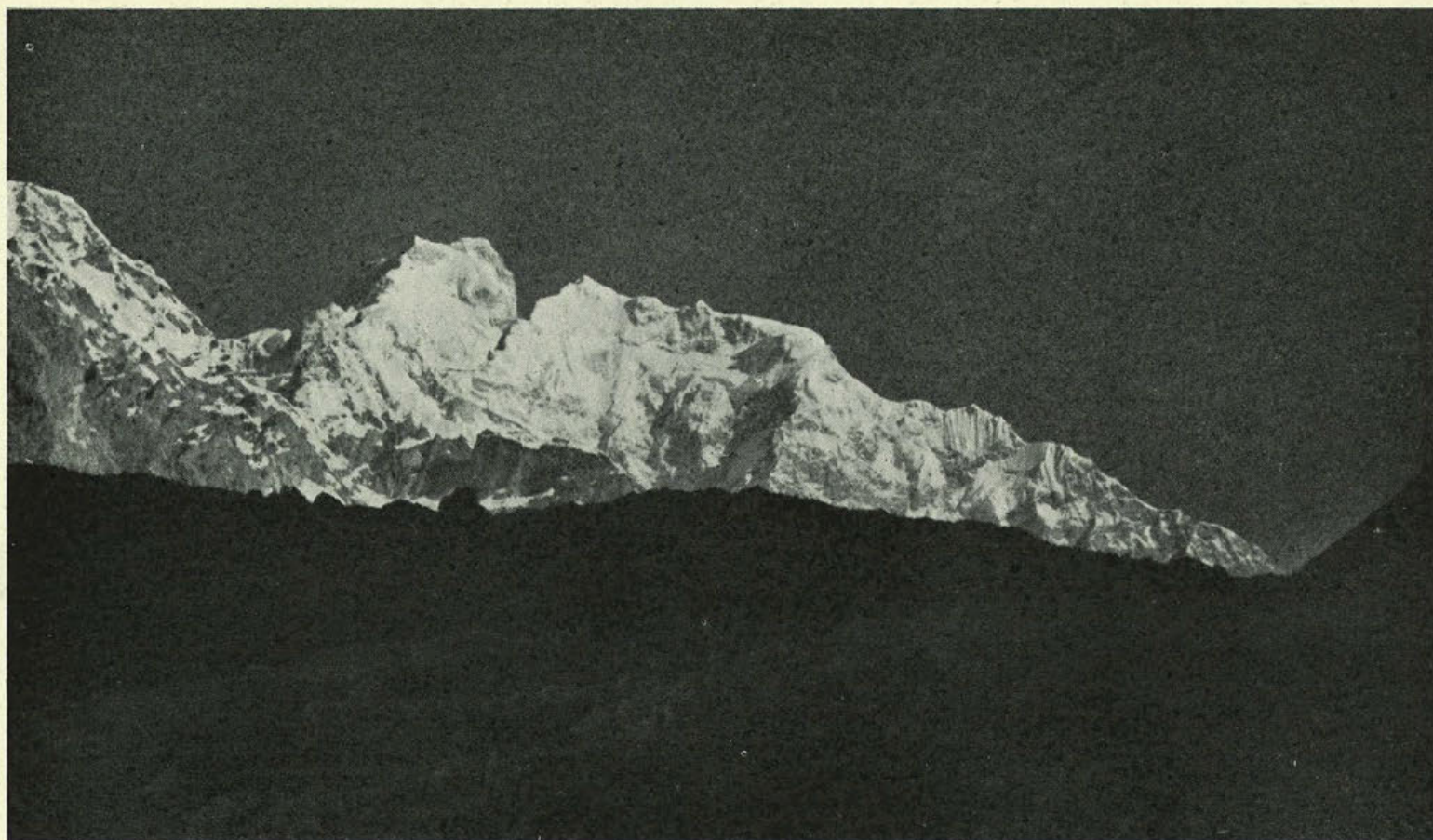
(Ostrovsky) illustrate the admirable Soviet policy of filming their drama and opera. Provided we go to see these films as students of Russian theatrical acting and production, and not as students of the cinema, all is very well.

The problem film of the quarter has been the Delannoy-Cocteau picture *L'Eternel Retour*, which has been stupidly retitled *Love Eternal* (which is a different thing) for the soft hearts of the British public. Many critics have commented on the three obvious factors which make it a strange choice by the Rank Organisation to launch French films on presumably unwilling provincial audiences. First, it is not typical of French films; second, it was obviously made under the "Aryan" influence of the Occupying forces; third, it exhibits many symptoms of a perverse and decadent imagination which will alienate it from all but those specialised audiences who enjoy supplying interpretations, or can enjoy purely aesthetic delights.

BITTER AND PERVERSE THEME

The film modernises into a timeless story the legend of Tristram and Iseult, in which the hero (Jean Marais as Patrice) and the heroine (Madeleine Sologne as Natalie) sublimate their youth and sexual desire into a passionate quest which is thwarted by age and power (symbolised by Marc who takes Natalie to wife from the burning hands of Patrice himself) and by their curious kindred, the Frossin family. This family symbolises evil, the bitter maternal jealous Gertrude with her imbecile husband stroking and polishing his collection of weapons, and their adult dwarf son Achille, demented, dangerously mischievous, persecuted, hating Patrice for his athletic youth. Patrice and Natalie are blonde and impersonal, they move in the half-world of time, their faces are masked with an expressionlessness relieved only by their eyes and the passion of their voices. Natalie finally runs away to the mountains with Patrice after their love is discovered by Marc, guided by the evil designs of the Frossin family. Patrice is shot by Achille when he seeks a second time for Natalie after she has been taken from him and imprisoned by Marc. In the end they die together, stretched on an upturned boat, symbols of the inescapable passion which the love potion they have taken engenders in them.

L'Eternel Retour is filled with a camera-poetry reflecting this bitter and perverse theme, sublimating queerness into an aesthetic power which compels the attention. The two profiles of Natalie and Patrice, the latter chin uppermost as his head hangs down off the shoulders of his bearers, are united in a tracking chose-shot. The dwarf's thefts in the castle are emphasized by a volley of shots of disappearing objects. When the word *jeunesse* is mentioned by the castle fireside before the marriage, the reactions of each person are built up to a climax of atmospheric tension. In the love scene between Patrice and Natalie by the same fireside shots upside-down give the effect of uneasiness with a climax of terror as the dwarf flings the love-potion bottle, marked "poison", on the floor between them. It is out of shots like this, and sequences like the scene in the garden of the castle to the croaking of bull-frogs, that the pervasive atmosphere of this film is constructed. It is the poetry of cinema indeed, but a poetry of a half-world where passion seems little removed from perversion.



ASSAULT ON MASHERBRUM

An account of an amazing filming expedition at a height of over 25,000 feet. Illustrations are from the film, which the author, MAJOR J. WALLER, D.S.O., M.C., is showing to the Royal Geographical Society on May 30th

MASHERBRUM IS A MOUNTAIN, 25,660 feet high, in the Karakoram Range, East of the Himalayas. It is 15 feet higher than the highest peak in the world that has yet been climbed.

In 1938 Masherbrum was an unexplored mountain.

The Expedition had no publicity. It had five members who financed it themselves. The expedition lasted three months. The cost, including equipment, food and transport, but excluding rail and steamer fares, was £500; £100 per member, or £33 per member per month.

In order to keep costs down to this low figure, baggage and equipment were cut to the minimum. Six hundred coolies have been employed by Everest and Nanga Parbat Expeditions; the greatest number employed by the Masherbrum Expedition was 70.

The Expedition set out from Srinagar, Kashmir, Northern India, on 28th April, 1938. It crossed the Himalayas by the Zoji La Pass, 11,500 feet high, and necessitating marching over snow for three days. It then dropped to the Indus Valley at 7,000 feet. Eighteen days after starting, a Reconnaissance Base Camp was established at Hushe, 10,500 feet, the highest village below Masherbrum.

From Hushe a fortnight was spent in exploring the glaciers falling from Masherbrum. By the end of that time a party had reached a height of 18,000 feet on that mountain.

At the end of May, Base Camp was pitched at 13,600 feet, and the climb started.

The lowest 4,000 feet, from 14,000 to 18,000 feet, lay up a steep and broken glacier. One part, some hundreds of feet high, was climbed by way of a pitch christened "Scaly Alley". It was an ice groove lying at about 45 degrees.

THE DOME

From 18,000 feet to 21,000 feet the party climbed up the snow and ice side of a ridge called the "Dome". The climbers sank to their knees or waists in the soft snow, which tended to slide on the steep ice beneath it. Camp 3 was finally pitched on the top of the Dome, at 20,600 feet.

The weather, up till this time, about 9th June, had been quite good. It certainly snowed most days, but there had been little wind and long bright periods. Now the weather deteriorated. It was not until 12th June that Camp 4 was established at 21,500 feet, below the final buttress of the peak. On 13th June the climbers spent all day in their tents, while a violent blizzard swept over them, and about two feet of new snow fell.

The assault on the summit started on 14th June, and was carried out by an advanced party of two climbers, Harrison and Hodgkin, and two Sherpa porters. That day, in bad weather, they established Camp 5 at 22,500 feet,

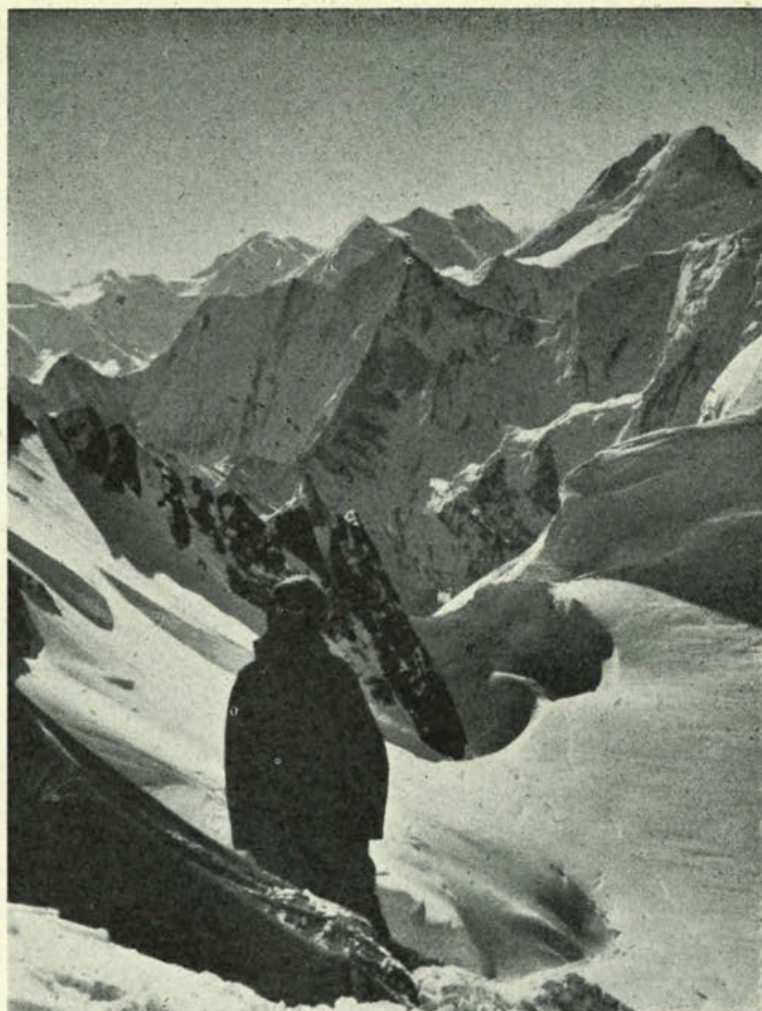
and on consecutive days Camp 6 at 23,600 feet and Camp 7 at 24,600 feet. From there the two climbers attempted to reach the summit, but were defeated and exhausted by a tearing wind and very difficult climbing. They reached about 25,000 feet and returned to Camp 7. Waller, with three porters, had arrived that day at Camp 6. In Camp 5 were Roberts, Graham Brown and two porters. The latter two parties were in support and were ready to leap-frog through the leading party in turn to make two further assaults on the summit.

That night an intense blizzard struck the mountain. In the very early morning a local slide of snow buried the single 6 lb. tent at Camp 7. Harrison and Hodgkin fought their way out, and tried to retreat through the blizzard, but soon became lost. In the afternoon they sheltered in a crevasse and shouted for assistance. Waller and his party searched till almost dark but could not find them. In the morning the two men reached Camp 6, having spent the night in the open at 24,000 feet and being terribly frost-bitten.

The retreat continued in appalling conditions—a tearing wind, driving snow, and ploughing through a bog of soft snow, often waist-deep. In two days the whole expedition had reached Camp 4. In another two days they achieved Base Camp. Everything not essential for the descent was abandoned. The injured men had to climb the whole way down the mountain, since carrying them was out of the question.

The Expedition's two doctors were waiting at Base Camp. It was owing to their efforts that the two frost-bitten men were carried the 250 miles back to civilisation with no more serious loss than the tips of their toes and fingers.

As a postscript, the injuries of the frost-bitten men did not prevent one from serving in the Army throughout the war and the other from continuing to climb while employed as a schoolmaster in the Dominions.



DEMONOLOGY

In this letter from America HERMAN G. WEINBERG mentions that the occult seems to be creeping into the films from Scandinavia He goes on to say that the economic leash has tamed many a fierce lion, but not Fritz Lang

AN ETHNOLOGIST once noted that the degree of culture and "civilization" of aboriginal or primitive peoples could be determined by their "artistic" bent, i.e., the degree of embellishment of their pottery, implements for hunting and fishing, sculpture of idols and fetishes, etc. (A recent exhibition of native arts and crafts of the South Seas at the Museum of Modern Art in New York revealed, not without a certain poignancy because of the loveliness of many of the items on display, that it is impertinent and ridiculous to talk about art as if we had "invented" it, or to attend such exhibits with the same air of superiority with which we visit a zoo.) The point the ethnologist made was that, after all, an earthenware pot is a functional thing, it does not have to be embellished with a design. Some aborigines could not understand the necessity to try to make their pottery more graceful. Other islanders did so instinctively. As Olive Moore put it in *The Apple Is Bitten Again*, "Art is the distance man places between himself and offal."

All of which is by way of lengthy introduction to the fact that no one has to make good films. If one makes serviceable films, commercially successful films, which please both audiences and investors (the latter because they have made money with those films), then everyone should be satisfied—theoretically. And in practice, this is to a large (a majority, I should say) extent true. Withal, some few audiences and investors are not satisfied so simply, nor are some film creators. It is not enough for some people just to see a film, as it is not enough for some producers and directors just to make a film. These are the people "who are looking for trouble", so to say. They want to "step out of line". They are the "cultural bolsheviks", "cultural degenerates", "crack-pots" and "arty" counterparts, generally, of that raffish throng who people the pages of Krafft-Ebing.

So it is that when one who does not have to make a good film makes a good film, he is a brave man, because he is risking not only his money but moral obloquy. In other times, "witches" have been burned for less than these brave film makers have "tried to get away with". Nor have times changed as much as we think, for there are, at this writing, some censor boards in the United States who are of the opinion that such a film as Fritz Lang's *Scarlet Street* should be destroyed. Its crime is that it has "stepped out of line"—it reveals an exceedingly attractive harlot (better looking than most of the women in the audience) whose only fault was a lack of tact at a crucial moment (and for that she pays with her life, which should be "moral" enough); her lover, who dies for a murder he did not commit because of the slightest circumstantial evidence

against him; and a respectably hen-pecked husband who gets mixed up with these two and because he is a fool and a hysteric, and because she teases him with promises of voluptuous delights (the like of which, in his over-wrought imagination, would have made even Scheherazade blush) robs for her, kills her when he realises he's been duped, and ends his days as a broken man, tormented by the fact that "these two are now together in death", as they were in life, and that he is responsible for their deaths. The miscarriage of justice, in the execution of the lover, is "balanced" by this torment. "You can't get away with crime, etc." Moral enough—one would think. Of course, love has destroyed them all. In America, love must triumph. This, in a country where one out of every four marriages ends in divorce.

LANG'S VINDICATION

But the point is that Lang *didn't have* to make something "so different" that he would run into trouble. He is versatile enough to handle any sort of story, to which he would bring that same quiet mastery over his material that characterized his best work. But he is an artist and an artist can no more change his impulse to do what he feels he must do than he can change the rhythm of his breathing.

I suppose Lang's vindication, to his colleagues, is the fact that *Scarlet Street* is also a huge success financially. I only hope it will encourage them to go and do likewise. The economic leash has tamed many a fierce lion. There is no more satisfaction in watching a film made by a talented director thus tamed than there is in watching a lion in a circus, similarly tamed. Each is an unnatural manifestation (i.e., against nature) and only the unnatural is evil.

Which leaves me just room enough for this quarter to say that Milestone's *A Walk in the Sun* is an honest war film, worth your attention, as is the French film, *La Cage aux Rossignols*, made during the occupation but winning and light-hearted for all that; and the Swedish film, *Girl and the Devil*, a curious study in demonology (every blade of grass in Delecarlia seems still to be troubled by witches—satanism dies hard, even in the modern world, *vide* last season's *Himlaspelet* (Swedish, and Delecarlia again), *The Cat People* and its sequel of a season or two before, *The Woman Who Came Back*, this season, etc.). As for *The Road to Utopia*, it defies criticism. If you are a Bob Hope-Bing Crosby fan, nothing I can say would deter you, so, for the others, I will merely note that here "embellishment of the earthenware pot", previously referred to, has been dispensed with for a good reason. There is no utensil to begin with. From which you might gather it was a metaphysical film. Could be



Zviratka a Petrovsti

THE CARTOON FILM IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

By A. D. HANUS-BECK

THE HISTORY of the cartoon film in Czecho-Slovakia is a chequered one, but at length real success is being achieved. The pioneer in this field was M. K. Dodal, a Czech painter, now working in America, whose early black-and-white cartoons were appreciated abroad, notably at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937.

Unfortunately, the German occupation of Czecho-Slovakia strangled all activities in the cultural as well as the economic field, and those few films made in Prague during the dark days clearly show the decadent German influence. There was one bright spot, however: apparently led by the idea that Prague would become a film centre for the Third Reich, the cartoon studios and laboratories got their share of the money which the Germans were pouring into the whole Czech film industry.

As a result, immediately after the liberation the production of cartoon films regained its old vigour, and with the nationalisation of the industry this branch of production was placed on a firm economic basis. To-day the Prague cartoon studios are employing 140 people and further development is only prevented by lack of material.

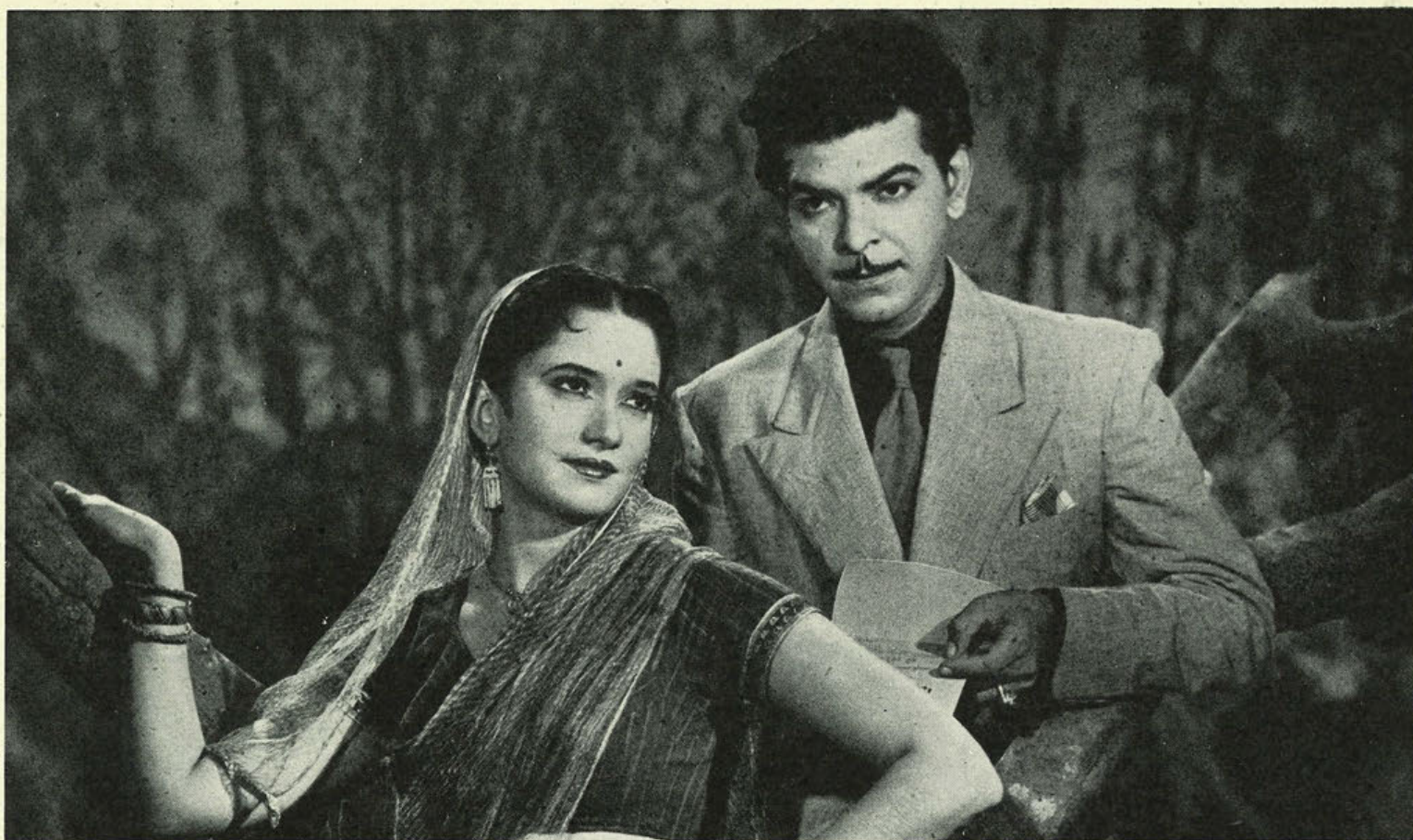
The leading Czech cartoonist is Jiri Trnka who has succeeded in creating a couple of wittily original and really national characters. He possesses a subtle understanding of the possibilities of colour combination and a genius for grasping and expressing, quite individually but still truthfully, the essence of Czech and Slav fairy tales

and legends. Trnka's figures and motifs differ, therefore, from Walt Disney inasmuch that they are inspired by the lyricism and poetry of Slav folklore. The result has been new ideas in photography, increasing perfection of movement and a new technique of design. Nevertheless work in the laboratories is hampered by lack of the necessary chemicals and by the quality of the raw film stock.

By the end of January, 1946, two short Czech cartoons in technicolor had been produced, and it is hoped to make five more plus a feature-length cartoon by the end of the year.

Cost of production not being covered by the home market, Czech cartoons will have to find their way abroad. Although Central and East Europe and, indeed, all Slav countries offer definite opportunities, it is earnestly hoped that Czech cartoons and Czech films in general will be given an opportunity of showing on British screens.

(The still on this page is from the latest Czech cartoon film in Technicolor, *Zviratka a Petrovsti*—"The Little Animals and the Robbers". An adaptation of a Czech fairy tale, the music is taken from a famous Czech ballet, "From Fairy Tale to Fairy Tale". It is hoped that this film will shortly be available from the Loan Section of the National Film Library by the courtesy of the Film Institute of Czecho-Slovakia.)



Gvalan

Sushila Rani and Sheikh Hassan

Amar

WHAT IS AN INDIAN "SOCIAL"?

by WINIFRED HOLMES

OF THE THREE TYPES of Indian feature film—historical, mythological and social—the latter are by far the most interesting and attractive to foreigners. Films of modern life, they deal for the most part with some problem of contemporary Indian society—some human problem which may hold all the elements of tragedy, such as the re-marriage of Hindu widows or the love of two students whose parents forbid their marriage for caste or other family reasons.

Western ideas and the spread of education are breaking down many time-honoured prohibitions of orthodox society, which inevitably leads to conflict and emotional disturbance.

These social films are made with a remarkable honesty and frankness and there is no attempt to manufacture an artificially happy ending if the story leads inevitably to a tragic conclusion. The absence of costume and elaborate sets seems to eliminate over-theatrical acting which so often spoils—to my taste—the historical and mythological films.

One such film—*The Unexpected*—made in Bombay by Shantaram, one of India's finest film-producers, roused public opinion to fight a crying social evil. A young girl, expecting to be betrothed to a personable young man in the usual way, finds she has been sold instead to his father, an elderly widower, by her uncle and aunt. Normally the girl's guardians send a dowry with her to the bridegroom, but in this case she was bought and forced into a hated marriage.

At first she is stunned by this discovery, but when she

goes up-country to her husband's home she recovers her fire and spirit and fights courageously against her fate. She cannot escape as there is no divorce in Hindu law and a Hindu woman owns no property, being herself first the property of her father or guardian and then of her husband. But she has other weapons. She refuses to sleep with her husband, or to cook for him, or do any of the things the traditional submissive Indian wife should do. Her mother-in-law, a bad-tempered old dame, is scandalised at her behaviour and persecutes and torments her. The old husband is hurt and angry and tries to win her over, but the young wife is adamant. She voluntarily turns her back on life and happiness, saying she must be a sacrifice on behalf of all the other women whose lives have been ruined by the greed of others.

Finally and unexpectedly it is the old man who commits suicide, convinced by her sincerity of the great wrong he has done her.

It is a moving film, beautifully and sensitively acted by the chief characters and with a real background of Indian domestic life. The songs, an inevitable part of every Indian film if it is to get a showing on the screen at all, are skilfully woven into the plot and the action and emotions were easily followed and carried complete conviction.

With sub-titles and judicious cutting for length, *The Unexpected* and other of these Indian "socials" would receive appreciation here not as novelties but as a serious contribution to the art of the cinema.

EDUCATIONAL FILMS—WHICH WAY NOW?

KEN ANNAKIN, *Director of "We of West Riding" and other documentaries, discusses the problems ahead and thinks that "the freshness of approach of the amateur must be retained in the production of the school film"*

SOME DOCUMENTARIES are made for showing mainly in cinemas. Others are designed for adult audiences in village halls, factory canteens and clubs. Since both types of film contain technical and general information, they are being shown increasingly in schools.

Educationalists generally are becoming very film-minded, therefore it has been all the more astonishing that requests should keep coming in to the documentary units that when making films which may be used in schools, music should be omitted, commentaries recorded without dialect or personality, and the maximum use made of sub-titles.

To those of us who believe that no film these days should be allowed to fall below the technical standards of the commercial cinema, such simplification has seemed to be a retrograde step. Surely the teachers must be out-of-date, too much tied to their text book methods, or simply biased towards some local effort of amateur production. Oh, yes, we have said many scathing remarks about these unseen critics!

The films most quoted as the ideal have been those made by the teachers-cum-sub-standard-film-enthusiasts of Dartington Hall, so a few weeks ago I made an unofficial and spare-time investigation. The result was most instructive and thought-provoking, and if, in setting down my findings, I use some of their films as guinea-pigs, I hope the Dartington Hall Film Unit will forgive me.

Two films are outstanding in their class. The first, *Rivers*, is an excellent lesson in simple geology. I find the information remains pictorially in my mind several weeks after seeing the film. The visuals are well chosen from library and illustrative scenes shot locally, and the diagrams are fully explanatory and only slightly crude (certainly not sufficiently to detract from the clear understanding of the lesson). They were designed and executed by the schoolmaster-director on a simple animation bench constructed by a craftsman in the district.

The other film, *Galapagos*, was shot by a boy of fourteen whilst on a holiday with a teacher. It deals with bird and animal life on the remote island of Galapagos. At the best,

one might have expected a dreary purposeless catalogue like the well-known quickies on dogs, horses and babies, forced at intervals on to cinema audiences before the feature is shown! As it is, the shots have been taken with great patience and intelligence and cut together simply in the order required for illustrating the information given in the sub-titles. The result is a first class lesson in biology and a rather exciting visual proof of the data on which Darwin based his "Origin of Species". What was most interesting to me was the realisation that this film held interest without any film tricks or skilful editing in the film sense!

Equally instructive was a film which fails. *Hawksmoor Nurse* is an attempt to produce a propaganda film persuading girls to choose T.B. nursing as a career. Here the lack of lights, lack of directing experience, and probably insufficient facilities, lets the film down, because one must immediately compare it with similar M.O.I. and documentary films. It is an attempt at film as such, and its amateur restrictions make it unacceptable to any audience accustomed to cinemas.

DOUBTS

After seeing these films and others, I projected a 16 mm. copy of one of my own films. *The New Crop* was made for the M.O.I. and tells the story of British timber and forests during the war, but it also contains a lot of information about forestry which I felt would provide a comparison for judging instructional values.

The New Crop was far superior photographically, but I soon had doubts as to whether that extra quality would make much difference to an audience watching films purely for instruction. Though the four dialect commentators had provided a pleasing human touch on 35 mm., I now found that on sub-standard they needed definite attention and concentration. I felt my attention being split between visual and sound. The two were not "married" as in normal cinema screening.

I had to admit that for purely instructional purposes there was a lot to be said for the silent film with sub-titles.

The mind is undoubtedly more at rest with a silent film and all the information is absorbed visually. The tempo is also more leisurely because the people who make the silent instructional films need not be worried about film as an art, requiring varied tempos for dramatic effect. Another point. None of the Dartington films cost more than £120 for 20 minutes screening time, whereas my film cost about £2,500 for the same running time!

As a result of this experiment I feel that the time has come to make a definite division between the documentary film produced commercially, and the educational film for schools.

If films are going into the cinemas they must bear comparison in treatment and technique with the rest of the programme. All films for adult audiences, instructional or propagandist, 16 mm. or 35 mm., must have film shape and artistry, therefore the production must remain in the hands of trained film technicians using the best equipment and studio facilities when necessary. A steady flow of good authoritative films can be maintained but they will each continue to take at least three or four months to produce and cost several thousand pounds.

On the other hand, the educational film for school use is mainly illustrative. It does not require long sequences with strict continuity. It is first and foremost a lesson, and the cheap silent films such as those made by the Dartington Unit certainly get over their lesson, and they can teach us a lesson too.

We in documentary have always believed that the film is an excellent medium for teaching a subject, yet the educational films which have been made in this country are a mere drop in the ocean. There are obviously thousands of simple lessons crying out to be taught to children by film, and therefore the medium should be made available in the cheapest and speediest form possible.

Also it must be remembered that there are different ways of teaching the same subject and therefore educationalists should be enabled to compile films quickly to suit their specific needs. If a schoolmaster can be supplied with the illustrative shots he requires he should, without difficulty, be able to work out his lecture indicating the important headings which should be made into sub-titles, and an enthusiast with little more than an amateur's ability in film making should be able to compile the film.

This brings me to the conclusion that a vast number of educational films could and should be made from stock shots augmented by simple 16 mm. shooting when necessary.

The focal point should be a well-indexed central library of film negative (for the stock shots). Millions of feet of

negative covering every aspect of life and scene in Britain and many foreign lands, have been acquired by the M.O.I. and British Council during the war. All this negative should be taken over by the new Central Information Office and given a permanent home. There should be a large staff of librarians to examine every shot and re-store with care, making detailed indexes of the subject material. This will be a colossal undertaking but far more economical than re-shooting.

As soon as possible provisional lists of the type of stock shots available should be prepared and circulated to educationalists all over the country. Teachers should also be provided with a simple account of how classroom films can be made. Only the mechanics of putting the films together, preparing diagrams and animation on film, sub-titling and so on, should be in the hands of film technicians.

These technicians should be young and recruited locally. Should they become deeply interested in direction or camera-work or the artistry of film, they should be immediately taken off this work and guided into the documentary sphere. I am convinced that these simple films for schools should be regarded first and foremost as educational, and it is the easiest thing in the world for a film maker to sell his soul to film as an art. It is a fascinating business. No, the spontaneity and freshness of approach of the amateur (or half-timer as at Dartington Hall) must be retained in the production of the school film.

Documentary technicians could do a great service by going out to the amateur film societies in various parts of the country and giving them a certain amount of professional instruction in how they could take part in the making of these educational films.

If such a scheme were started, 16 mm. laboratories would also have to be established in the main towns. They should be equipped to handle reduction work from 35 mm. to 16 mm., printing and optical work, and there should be facilities in the same buildings for simple animation work, sub-titling, and film assembly.

A final thought. The silent film with sub-titles and compiled most from stock shots as suggested, is ideal for international use. Foreign versions of the titles can be made very easily and cheaply.

We in Britain often talk about re-educating Europe and the backward areas of the world. The need is certainly there, and here is our chance. Let us make hundreds of educational films for our own schools on the lines suggested and at infinitesimal cost (on film standards) send out foreign versions wherever they can be used. Unless we do something of this kind, America will.

THE TRAINING FILM AND THE DOCUMENTARY PRODUCERS

"If the documentary film producers are to continue to make training films, they must learn that such films are very different from documentaries. That is a lesson some producers, but by no means all, learned in the last few years." The author of this provocative article is F. R. KING, who for four of the war years was employed on the Staff of the Director of Naval Training at the Admiralty engaged in making and using training films for the Navy

OVER THE PAST SIX YEARS there has been a tremendous increase in the production of training films—mainly for the fighting services.

Most of these films have been produced either by service film units or by documentary companies doing the work under contract. It cannot be doubted that there is a large potential field of development here for the film industry to take up and expand. Industry, technical colleges and Government departments are all likely to require films which will assist them in tasks of training men and women in their daily jobs and in social education.

AS WELL VERSED IN HIS SUBJECT

Scientific discoveries have made it almost impossible for the skilled worker to learn and understand his job unless training methods keep pace with the increasing tempo of technical advances. When we realise that the ordinary electrician of to-day should be as well versed in his subject as were the leading scientists of his grandfather's generation, we see the necessity for using the most powerful methods at our disposal in order that his knowledge may be brought into line with the latest technical advances as quickly as possible. Semi-skilled or unskilled workers also will be more efficient and will work more happily if they have a better understanding of what they are doing and why.

That is not to say that education shall be neglected for the sake of technical learning. Education is designed, or should be, to develop the mind, while training aims at assisting that mind to acquire a technical skill or technical knowledge to be used in a practical, rather than a cultural, activity. Unless it be thought that this is pure pedantry, let me say at once that, for the film makers who intend to tackle the production of training films, it is a first essential that they understand this vital distinction between training and education. Not only this, but if the documentary film producers are to continue to make training films, they must learn that such films are, again, very different from

documentaries. That is a lesson some producers, but by no means all, learned in the last few years.

PRODUCERS MUST STEP DOWN

The second lesson taught by war experience is that a training film is an aid to instruction and not just a film to be shown to trainees. In practical terms this means that in the production of a training film the instructor must be the judge on the correctness of the approach angle, the tempo of the film, and the technique of the presentation. The producer must give up many of his sovereign rights, retaining only that which belongs to him by right of his technical skill as a film maker—that of solving the film problems involved.

It is useless to make a training film, however good a film it may be, if it is not a good aid to training. Neither the producer nor the director can be expected to know a good teaching instrument from a bad one unless he happens to be a good practising teacher in the subject to be taught, or unless he has built up a background of experience which will enable him to judge with fair accuracy. To make a training film then, it is necessary for the producer to weld his knowledge of the screen to the needs of the instructor. Again, some documentary producers know this already, but many do not.

A CRAFT—NOT AN ART

For many years now we have been familiar with the idea that the cinema was an art—or should have been an art. This point of view has been argued by the documentary film makers more vehemently than by any other sections of the film industry. To maintain that the use of celluloid should or could be the prerogative of artistic genius shows a sad lack of understanding of the work of the film industry and of the technicians and writers who work in it. Perhaps a film can be a work of art, but film-making, which is the business of the vast majority of those who earn their bread

and butter by its means, is a craft, even as printing and publishing is a craft.

A film must be, above all things, a workmanlike effort. This is true of the entertainment film and it is true of the training film. But whereas the workmanship in an entertainment film can sometimes be glossed over by the imaginative content, the training film demands by its very nature that workmanship and functional efficiency come first.

A CLEAR IDEA

In order to achieve this functional aim, it is essential in training film production to start off with a clear idea of the object which the film is going to attain.

Most documentary producers are well aware of the limitations of the film medium. There are many wonderful things the film can do—but there are many quite ordinary things of which it is incapable.

Documentary producers are quite used to setting themselves an object before engaging on a new film, but they

may not be so familiar with the notion that the object is not one of impressing, but of imparting. Effects for their own sake are not required, but only effects as a means to a practical end.

SOUL SEARCHING

It is, of course, as impossible to lay down hard and fast rules for the making of instructional films as it would be to tabulate rules for making any type of film. Equally it is impossible to sort out all the differences between documentary and instructional films, but it is important that producers should do a lot of soul searching and study the wealth of research and experience which is now becoming available, in order that this side of the film industry should start on the right foot.

The war is over and a big field of expansion in training films lies ahead. The obvious people to tackle the job are the documentary film producers. It will be a sad day for this undeveloped side of the film industry if the chance is missed or spoiled because the lessons of the war were not adequately learned.

VISUAL AIDS IN GERMAN SCHOOLS

The second of two articles by MAJOR G. BUCKLAND SMITH, at present in charge of the Film Institute set up in the British Zone of Occupied Germany. All captured German Educational Films have been sent to the British Film Institute for expert criticism and analysis. Negatives are at present being preserved in the National Film Library and copies of those suitable for schools will be circulated through the Central Film Library

THE ARTICLE published in the October issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, though it outlined in general the organisation and the work of the Reichsanstalt für Film und Bild in Wissenschaft und Unterricht in Germany, failed to give a true picture of the use of visual aids in schools under the Nazi regime. It is important that this true picture should be shown in Britain because there were undesirable elements as well as a praiseworthy organisation in the German system and because there are those in Britain who would have for that country a system on similar lines, and it is important that the possibilities and limitations of a Government sponsored and controlled organisation should both be realised.

The use of visual aids, including films, began long before the Nazis came to power and followed much the same lines

as in Britain. The producers were private firms, the users were the schools. Regional libraries were established one by one by the local education authorities and, during the time of the Weimar Republic, a federation of these Kreis- and Landes- Bildstellen was achieved. It was all very encouraging, the same promising state that exists in Britain to-day.

THE REICHSANSTALT

The next move was undoubtedly due to the inspiration of Dr. Kurt Zierold. Dr. Zierold first went to the Ministry of Education at the early age of 26 under Becker in the year 1925. When Becker was dismissed in 1930, he continued under Grimme and, in 1931 went into the Kultur Abteilung as "referent" for literature, theatre and film. In

1933, when Grimme was dismissed by the Nazis, Zierold remained, although with considerably diminished activities. He continued at the Ministry until the capitulation in 1945, in spite of his not being a member of the Party.

The Reichsanstalt, or R.W.U. as it is generally known, was founded in June, 1934, under the title of "Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm" or Rfd.U. It was in law a public limited liability company, the necessary initial capital of 20,000 Rm. required by German law being found by the Ministry of Education. In fact, it was a Nazi organisation, created by a Ministerial decree of the 26th June, 1934, which stated, "For the guidance and maintenance of a uniform policy with regard to the use of instructional films in schools, I have created the Reichsstelle für den Unterrichtsfilm".

Later, when the work of the Rfd.U. was extended to embrace slides, pictures, gramophone records, etc., the more exalted title of Reichsanstalt was bestowed upon it in another Ministerial decree of the 6th February, 1940. A further decree of the 4th July, 1942, established once and for all the attitude which the Ministry of Education adopted towards the R.W.U. "Es ist zutreffend dass die R.W.U. eine Dienststelle meines Ministeriums ist . . . Sie hat daher den Charakter einer Reichsbehörde" states this decree. "It is to be understood that the R.W.U. is an official department of my Ministry . . . It is, therefore, in the nature of a Government office".

NAZI EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

The decree of June, 1934, makes very interesting reading and provides a good insight into the Nazi educational ideas. It begins "The National Socialist State has imposed new tasks on the German schools. To fulfil these tasks all pedagogical and technical aids must be used. One of the more important aids is the film. Without disregarding what has already been achieved in various directions in this field, it must be said that this modern teaching aid has not yet had the recognition it deserves. The new State has been the first to overcome the psychological prejudices ranged against the technical developments of the cinema and it is anxious, also, to use the film as an instrument for the propagation of its ideals. This has to be done particularly in the ordinary class lessons in the schools. Being an equivalent aid, the film must replace textbooks wherever the motion picture is more impressive to the pupils than anything else. It is my wish that the film will occupy without delay that place in the schools to which it is entitled, and I want to stress particularly the possibility of using films

in the new school subjects of Rassen- and Volkskunde from their very beginning".

The policy of the R.W.U. was entrusted to a Board including representatives of the Ministries of Education, Propaganda and Occupied Territories, the Central Institute for Education, the Reichsfilmkammer, and the Lehrerbund, the teachers' organisation of the Nazi party. In fact, this Board met very seldom.

INCOME

The income of the R.W.U. was derived from the Lernmittelbeitrag, a levy of 80 Rpf. a year on all children, with certain exceptions, in all schools using visual aids, instituted by the same decree of June, 1934. A similar levy of differing amounts produced an income from trade and agricultural schools, secondary schools and university colleges. This income was a good one, amounting in the best year to some 8,000,000 Rm. and although the expenditure of the R.W.U. on apparatus, production, copying, etc., was enormous, the accumulated fund (mostly in Government credit notes) at April, 1945, was 23,000,000 Rm.

The authority of the R.W.U. over the regional and local libraries and on all questions relating to visual aids in schools was remarkable and derived entirely from Ministerial decrees. One decree, for example, stated that a list of films, etc., available in the local library must be available in each school staff room. Another stated that all use of films and other visual aids would be recorded by the teacher in his records (Day Book, etc.) and that these records were to be periodically examined. In 1935 it was decreed that only films obtained through the R.W.U. and the local libraries could be used in schools. A licence to purvey films other than through the R.W.U. was inadmissible. The R.W.U. was regarded as the sole authority for the approval of films, slides, etc., available to schools.

The Ministry of Propaganda built up a similar organisation for the distribution and exhibition of propaganda films to adult audiences and a further decree from the Ministry of Education defined clearly the duties of the R.W.U. and the regional libraries required to co-operate in this scheme.

QUANTITY, NOT QUALITY

It is obvious from this evidence that the whole scheme, while it served the purposes of the National Socialist State very well and put Germany into the fore as a user of school films, left very much to be desired. The development of instructional films in Germany, except on the distribution side, is far behind that in many other countries. The

watertightness of the scheme left no opportunities for research and experiment either of production or of teaching techniques. For example, film strips were not approved by the Ministry or by the R.W.U. and so were not to be used in German schools. The Ministry decided that it was better to have a large number of schools using silent films in a short space of years than a few schools using sound films (a natural decision when there were "ideals" to be propagated) and so there has been no use made of sound films in instruction. Even the training of teachers in the use of visual aids in schools was originated by a decree which laid down the form the study was to take and the literature and materials which were to be used.

In spite of all this, it must be admitted that there is much useful film and picture material in Germany. The President of the R.W.U., Dr. Kurt Gauger, and some of his staff were active Party members; the Chairman, Dr. Zierold, and many others of the staff, were not. In general, the R.W.U. regarded it as their job to produce good instructional stuff to be used in schools within the limitations imposed upon them. What can be said against everyone is that they not only accepted these limitations but also came to believe them to be pedagogical in origin.

PROPAGANDA PRESSURE

There is no doubt that considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the R.W.U. by the Ministry of Propaganda, and it must be due to some resistance on the part of the R.W.U. that the large majority of its films contain no undesirable material at all. With the slides it is different but, no doubt, where it was possible to convince the Propaganda Ministry that many of its suggestions were not suitable film subjects, it must have been almost impossible to turn down the slides.

What is being done by the Control Commission for Germany with this vast organisation for the production and distribution of visual aids to schools?

It was early recognised that the films and slides already in circulation (after censorship) would be of immense value to the over-worked German teachers already handicapped by crowded classrooms, refugee children, a shortage of textbooks and of writing materials. Authority was given for the continuance of the regional and local libraries, after suitable screening of the staffs, under the local education authorities. The films were examined and lists circulated of those approved and of those to be surrendered. Many of those surrendered will be suitable for use after a little editing.

The slides and pictures are a different proposition

because of the quantity involved. Some sets in common use have been approved and lists of those which are forbidden have been circulated. There remain, however, many which have yet to be seen. To continue the job and to exercise complete control over the use of visual aids in the schools, a centre and a large German staff are necessary, a centre to take the place of the R.W.U.

The R.W.U. buildings still exist in the American sector of Berlin so that its re-establishment or not remains an American responsibility. They are beginning to tackle the problem with the assistance of a quadripartite advisory council. In the meantime, it has been decided to set up a centre in each zone to continue the work of the R.W.U., to co-ordinate the activities of the regional and local libraries, and to ensure the purging of existing material.

THE BRITISH ZONE

In the British zone this has already been achieved with the establishment in Hamburg of a German Film Institute made up of remnants of the personnel, equipment and funds of the R.W.U., which were dispersed into the British zone during the sack of Berlin. Dr. Zierold, who is now in Hanover working under ex-Minister Grimme at the Provincial department of education, is Chairman of a zonal committee formed to suggest plans for the furtherance of visual aids in German schools and the future of the Institute. For the time being, the Institute will work under the direction of the Education Branch, Control Commission for Germany, on the compiling of statistics, the vetting of films, slides, etc. New production cannot be envisaged at the moment because of the almost complete absence of raw stock in the British zone.

It is difficult to foresee future developments in the field of visual aids in Germany. Certainly what was wrong in the past will not be permitted again but, just as certainly, whatever is re-established must be capable of fitting in with the German educational scheme and so cannot be built up on lines that would necessarily be suitable in Britain.

One interesting fact is that the same building in Hamburg now houses both the German Film Institute and the School Broadcasts organisation for the British zone. School Broadcasts were not encouraged by the Nazis and the country was, in 1945, twelve years behind in the development of this interesting and valuable teaching aid. What will be the result of the two organisations working together under one roof remains to be seen, but there are many interesting possibilities.

NOTES AND NEWS

Will Film Societies please note that copy should reach this office not later than the 1st of January, April, July and October, and if possible much earlier. Owing to great pressure on space copy should be kept as short as possible

British Film Institute

The Annual General Meeting of the British Film Institute was held on April 4th, with the Duke of Sutherland, K.T., the Institute's President, in the chair. A full report of this meeting will be included in next quarter's SIGHT AND SOUND.

The Annual Summer Courses on visual education and film appreciation will be held this year at Leeds and Bangor respectively, the first from July 16th to 30th, and the second in the last fortnight of August. Full details may be obtained on application to the Secretary of the B.F.I.

At the time of going to press the Ministry of Education's proposals with regard to visual education had not yet been officially announced. They cannot, therefore, be dealt with here, but a detailed analysis together with their bearing on the future policy of the British Film Institute and its branches will be included in our next issue.

During the quarter, three meetings of representatives of organisations and Government Departments concerned with the use of the film were held at the request of the Ministry of Education in order to formulate a policy with regard to the cinema to be put forward by the British Delegate to the Preparatory Commission of U.N.E.S.C.O. As a result of the proposals put forward, the Governors of the British Film Institute have been requested by the Government to form, in co-operation with these organisations, the permanent advisory council representing film interests in the U.K. on problems raised in U.N.E.S.C.O.

A highly successful Conference on Films for Children was held at the Royal Empire Society on April 9th in conjunction with the National Council of Women.

By the time this appears in print details of the Budget will be an old tale, but it will not be due to lack of representations made by the British Film Institute if the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not seen fit to exempt Film Societies from entertainment tax.

Commencing with the next issue, SIGHT AND SOUND will revive its old feature, "Notes of the Quarter", in which the British Film Institute's own policy and comment on the news of the day will be given adequate space.

Scottish Film Council

To celebrate the formal opening of its reorganized premises at 2 Newton Place, Glasgow, the Council held a press reception on 20th December.

Considerable progress has been made with the building up of the Council's Information and Research Centre. Much of the preliminary work of cross-indexing the Reference Library has been completed under the supervision of Mr. William Stewart, Secretary of the Scottish Library Association. All Scottish Libraries have been circularised and the Scottish Union Catalogue of Books on Cinematography is being brought up to date. The Research Committee of the Scottish Educational Film Association has been active. Its first publication, "Attendance of School-children at the Cinema" by Dr. D. M. McIntosh, had an excellent press. Investigations are proceeding into such subjects as "The Place of the Museum in Education", "Grade Placement of Films", "Film Strips of Life in the United States", "The Use of the Film with Backward Children". The result of these investigations will be published in due course.

The Classroom Film Reviewing Scheme is being reorganized, and will place more emphasis on the appraisals of pupils. Under the new scheme each film for review will be sent to two or more individual teachers who will use the film with their own class or classes. After seeing the film the pupils will fill up a Pupils' Appraisal Form. The results of pupils' appraisals will then be tabulated on a Summary Form by the teacher, who, in the light of these and of his own observations and judgment will complete the Reviewing Form. All this data is placed before a Specialist Panel (e.g. Geography) which sees the film and prepares a final assessment.

Just as the creation of the Scottish Central Film Library helped to solve the difficulties of film supply, so the Council is planning a similar arrangement with regard to projection equipment. Through its Equipment and Servicing Scheme, the Council aims at setting up an organization to act as central purchasing and servicing agency for equipment on behalf of local education authorities, using local dealers as its agents for purposes of decentralisation. The scheme has been very favourably received by the local authorities.

The Council has undertaken to organize a course on visual aids for H.M. Inspectors and Training College Lectures in Jordanhill Training College during the week commencing 8th July.

Belfast Film Institute Society

The Society's current season is proving successful in spite of a falling off in membership attributable to the lack of a suitable permanent home, and thanks to a nucleus

of enthusiasts and an increasing number of guests and visitors, the repertory shows are keeping interest alive in anticipation of the day when the Society is able to present its programmes in more appropriate and comfortable surroundings. Films shown have been *Fantasia*, *Hartobagy*, *A Chaplin Festival*, *Les Perles de la Couronne*, *Tarakanova* and *Birth of a Nation*.

Among supporting programmes were notably *Le Journal de la Résistance* and the Canadian *Chansons Populaires* cartoons. Future bookings include *L'homme Qui Cherche la Verité* and *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki*.

By arrangement with M.G.M. members were enabled to see the local preview of *The Last Chance*. The Society's monthly Film Bulletin of Reviews continues its useful and popular circulation.

Bradford Film Institute Society

The Bradford Film Institute Society inactive during the War Years, has been revived. An Inaugural Meeting and Film Show was held on October 7th, 1945, at which Oliver Bell was our principal speaker. As a result of that meeting over 100 members were enrolled into the Society. Our present membership is 170, which must be increased if we are to fulfil our function as a Film Institute Society. The Chairman of the Society is J. E. Haygarth, the Treasurer A. N. Ramus, and the Secretary L. W. R. Hill.

Our season opened on October 14th with a lecture illustrated with films by Paul Rotha. Other lecturers have been James Hill, documentary film director and John Madison, Regional Film Officer for the M.O.I. Feature films shown have been *Strange Incident*, *An Italian Straw Hat*, *The Testament of Doctor Mabuse*, *Amphytrion*, *Hortobagy* and *Un Carnet de Bal*, along with such documentaries as *T.V.A.*, *Teaching*, *Rodin*, *Star in the Sand*, *Story of D.D.T.*, *Minuet by Mozart* and *Chanson Populaires*. Our film shows are held at the Bradford Civic Playhouse and response has been so good that we have had to have an additional matinee showing as well as our usual evening performance.

In conjunction with the Bradford Ciné Circle a showing of 16 mm. amateur films was arranged which included *Winter Session*, a film made in conjunction with the Educational Authorities to encourage young people of school leaving age to continue their studies at Night School.

Our other activities include the publishing of a monthly film bulletin which included a selection of the films showing in Bradford which are worth seeing. An educational sub-committee has been formed whose function will be to advise on the use of films as an educational medium and to arrange discussion and film shows for the children of Bradford. It is hoped to arrange a three-day summer film school at the Bradford Civic Playhouse in late July.

The Secretary would be pleased to exchange film programmes, etc. with other film societies.

Manchester Film Institute Society

The Society has just completed its 1945-46 season of 35 mm. shows, during which the membership has reached the highest figure for many years—over 800. The features shown have been *Ils Etaient Neuf Celibataires*, *The Blue Angel*, *Lermontov*, *The Italian Straw Hat*, *Esprit*, and *Exstase*. Shorts have included *Minuet by Mozart*, *Looking Through Glass*, *Tell Me if it Hurts*, *Rainbow Dance*, *Highland Doctor*, *The Champion*, *Rodin*, *Chants Populaires*, *The Last Shot*, and *Public Opinion*.

The usual series of 16 mm. lunch hour shows for the general public as well as members has continued throughout the winter. These have attracted very good attendances for programmes of such widely contrasted films as *Life on the Western Marshes*, *The Tacoma Narrows Bridge*, *Our Country*, *The Beginnings of the Cinema*, and Excerpts from early Russian classics.

There is ample evidence that the kind of work which film societies are doing is growing steadily in popularity. That this is not merely a passive interest the increased demand for lectures, discussions, and shows on special subjects, testify. But so far as 35 mm. feature shows are concerned their popularity will soon be considered large enough, even in the provinces, to warrant the establishment of many more "Cosmos". Whether film societies will then continue to serve a useful purpose depends on the facilities available for imaginative programme building. Taking composite films, for example, their acquisition at the present time is fantastically difficult; the "classics" are soon exhausted and where, for a start, is the feature counterpart of "Film and Reality"? The time has come when film societies should take practical steps to meet the situation which will arise when the inhabitants of many provinces are, at last, considered capable of supporting something of the amenities which London has always enjoyed.

Merseyside Film Institute Society

The Society's regular monthly film shows at the Philharmonic Hall have continued. *Tarakanova* was shown in December, *Piege* in January, *Adventurers in Bokhara* in February and *Gens Du Voyage* and *They Came to a City* in March.

In addition there have been a series of Sunday afternoon shows at the Tatler News Theatre when the features have been *The Blue Angel*, *Hortobagy*, *Madchen in Uniform* and *Taqdeer*.

The usual end-of-term film shows for technical and secondary schoolchildren were presented to over 7,000 scholars in December last, whilst a special Children's Christmas show in January was a new feature in the Society's programme and on this occasion the main films were *Pimpernel Smith* and a *Chaplin* revival.

At the end of 1945 the Society suffered the loss of one of its Hon. Secretaries, Mr. G. Allen Batty, who has left Merseyside and in his departure we lose something which will be difficult to replace. Our regret at his going is no less than the goodwill with which we wish him success in his new professional work elsewhere.

Australian Film Society (Victorian Division)

The Society, founded in late 1944, has had a highly successful first season. Shows are at present given in the Radio School Theatre, Melbourne, but a larger cinema at which Sunday viewings are possible is being sought. Programmes to date have included, among documentaries, *Night Mail*, *North Sea*, *World of Plenty* and *With the Marines at Tarawa*, and among features, Eisenstein's *Ten Days That Shook the World* and *Alexander Nevski*.

Informal discussions have taken place during the year with representatives of the comparable societies in Sydney and Canberra. There appears to be general agreement that some loose form of Federal organisation is desirable which, while allowing the constituent societies autonomy in their own affairs, could take action in matters of common interest, such as importation of films, censorship or representation on the National Film Board.

Hon. Secretary of the Society is Mr. Hugh Steyne, Radio School, Melbourne Technical College, Latrobe Street, Melbourne, C.I., Australia.

Cape Town Film Society, South Africa

This Society, formed in the latter half of last year, is prospering and already has 350 members. Its success has led to a move to form similar societies in at least four other South African centres. Some difficulty is, however, being experienced in obtaining suitable feature films. Programmes so far have included: *Ruggles of Red Gap*, *Broad Fourteens*, *North Sea* and a number of documentaries, including *Night Mail* and *Stricken Peninsula*. The Chairman of the Society is Mr. G. V. Smith, P.O. Box 3218, Cape Town, South Africa.

Colombo Film Society, Ceylon

Working under difficulties, mainly due to shortage of suitable films, the Society's first six months of existence have nevertheless been highly successful. Films shown have included *Hellzapoppin*, *World of Plenty*, *In Which We Serve*, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, *Battle of China*, *Target For To-Night* and *Journal de la Resistance*. The Society now has over 200 members and it is hoped that, with the ending of the war, the problem of film supply will become more easy.

The Dunfermline and West Fife Film Society

After being in abeyance for six years the Society resumed activities in January. The season opened with a 16 mm. performance of M.O.I. documentaries illustrating various aspects of Scottish life. During an interval Mr. Norman Wilson underlined the film programme with an interesting talk on the documentary film. Two standard programmes have since been held in the Palace Kinema, by courtesy of the directors. The films included *Remontons Les Champs Elysees*, *Le Jour Se Leve*, *MacBeth* and *Some Like it Rough*. Difficulty was experienced with H.M. Customs and Excise who, inexplicably exempted *Remontons Les Champs Elysees* from tax but decided that *Le Jour Se Leve* was liable. A repertory programme of early sound films including *The Blue Angel*

and *Night Mail* has had to be postponed until the autumn and a substitute programme will be held in April with such films as *World of Plenty* and *Journal de la Resistance*. The membership, at 295, is a decided and encouraging increase on pre-war figures.

Perth Film Society

This Society was formed at the beginning of November, 1945, with the encouragement and support of the Dundee Film Society. With this backing, it was decided to carry out an intensive press and mail letter campaign, which met with most gratifying success, the membership standing at just over 500 on the night of the first performance on 16th December. Membership has been limited to 600, which is now all but reached, with 100 guest tickets, as it is felt that membership should include the privilege of bringing guests. The Alhambra Theatre has been secured for the performances.

Programmes so far have been as follows: December 16th: *Carnet de Bal*, *C.E.M.A.* and *Tulips Shall Grow*. January 13th: *La Kermesse Heroique*, *Highland Doctor*, *Figaro and Clio*. February 3rd: *Spring Song*, *This is Colour*, *Hymn of the Nations*. February 24th: *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *Crofters*, *Carmen*, *Ferdinand the Bull*. March 17th: *Ils Etaient Neuf Celibataires*, *Children of the City*, *Dipsy Gypsy*.

Exemption has been refused for *Ils Etaient Neuf Celibataires*, and any Society which has received exemption for this film within the last two years is invited to communicate with the address below.

Other Societies are invited to exchange programmes. These should be sent to the Programme Convener, Dr. James Kelman, 26 Viewlands Terrace, Perth.

Birmingham Grammar Schools' Film Society

The Heads of the Birmingham Grammar Schools are trying the experiment of a film society for the senior pupils of their schools as a means of developing the interest created by the three days Film Appreciation Course, held last November. More than 800 boys and girls attended the first performance on February 16th. Films already shown or planned include *The Magnificent Ambersons*, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Grapes of Wrath* and Richard Massingham and Robert Benchley shorts.

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